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**OSCE Permanent Council 895
Vienna, 22 December 2011**

EU statement on the events in western Kazakhstan

The EU is deeply concerned about the tragic events that took place in western Kazakhstan, in which several people have died and many others were injured, and which led to the introduction of a state of emergency in the town of Zhanaozen. The very high death-toll registered during violent clashes is of our particular concern. We express our sincere condolences to the families of the victims and wish all those who sustained injuries a quick and complete recovery. We urge all parties to exercise restraint and avoid further violence.

The EU welcomes the investigation, announced by Prime Minister Masimov and led by Deputy Prime Minister Shukeyev. We join the OSCE Chairman-in-Office in urging Kazakhstan to ensure that their investigations are conducted transparently and with full respect for human rights. In this context, particular attention should be paid to the rights of those who were detained by the authorities during these tragic events. We would appreciate receiving more details on the possibility of including independent experts in the investigation.

The EU believes that addressing the socio-economic and humanitarian concerns of the people of western Kazakhstan is also an important next

step. As stated by the spokesperson of the EU High Representative Catherine Ashton on 17 December, we hope “that there will be a peaceful solution found to the problems faced by the striking oil workers, through social dialogue”.

At all times it is very important that Kazakhstan’s OSCE commitments and other international obligations, including those pertaining to freedom of assembly and freedom of expression, are fully respected. We underline that the measures introduced by the authorities in Zhanaozen must not unduly restrict these freedoms.

The European Union thanks the Delegation of Kazakhstan for providing today and during the briefing organized on 19 December information about the events in the Zhanaozen district. We also thank the OSCE Centre in Astana for its useful reporting on these events.

We request the Delegation of Kazakhstan to keep us informed about the course and results of the investigation of the events and about the implementation of the decree of the Head of State “On Introducing the State of Emergency in the town of Zhanaozen of Mangistau Oblast”.

The acceding country CROATIA*, the candidate countries THE FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA, MONTENEGRO and ICELAND**, the countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates countries ALBANIA, BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA and SERBIA, the European Free Trade Association countries LIECHTENSTEIN and NORWAY, members of the European Economic Area, the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA and SAN MARINO align themselves with this statement.

*Croatia, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Montenegro continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.

**Iceland continues to be a member of EFTA and the European Economic Area.