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STATEMENT BY THE EUROPEAN UNION AT THE 1156th MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL

31 August 2017

Regarding legislative developments in Moldova

We should like to inform the OSCE participating States that on 21 July the High Representative and Vice-President of the Commission Federica Mogherini and the Commissioner Johannes Hahn issued the following statement:

“Thursday’s vote of the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova to implement changes to the country’s electoral system goes directly counter to the recent recommendations of the Venice Commission and OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights.

While the choice of an electoral system is a sovereign decision of a State, the European Union strongly believes that any change to the electoral system should strengthen democracy, be based on a broad consensus amongst political forces, and follow a genuine consultation of civil society and recommendations of the international partners.

We continue to share the view of the Venice Commission and the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights that the proposed changes raise serious concerns regarding effective democracy in the current political context.

The European Union will continue to follow closely the developments around the electoral reform and its implementation. The EU has repeatedly – most recently during the planned Macro-Financial Assistance procedure – stressed the need to respect effective democratic mechanisms, including a multi-party parliamentary system and the rule of law.

The implementation of these changes will be assessed also in light of the Republic of Moldova’s obligations under the Association Agreement and as a member of the Council of Europe.”

In the context of the adoption of amendments to the law on the special status of Gagauzia by the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova on 21 July, we recall our attachment to strengthening the status of Gagauzia as an autonomous territorial unit. In March this year, we called in this Council for the adoption of the amendments proposed by the Permanent Working Group on Co-operation between the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova and the People’s Assembly of Gagauzia.

The EU will also closely monitor the discussions on reform of the broadcasting code and the draft law on non-governmental organizations (NGOs). We would recall our

attachment to media pluralism in the Republic of Moldova. We also express our concern at the draft law on NGOs, which would involve numerous constraints on them. The EU reminds the Republic of Moldova that the planned law should take account of the recommendations of the Venice Commission.

The candidate countries the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia,¹ Montenegro,¹ Serbia¹ and Albania,¹ the country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the Free Trade Association country and member of the European Economic Area Norway align themselves with this statement.

¹ The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.