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STATEMENT BY THE EUROPEAN UNION AT THE 1285th MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL

15 October 2020

On the situation in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict zone

The European Union welcomes the announcement on 10 October of a humanitarian ceasefire agreement concluded between Armenia and Azerbaijan. It would like to take this opportunity to echo the statement by the High Representative/Vice-President Josep Borrell of 11 October, in which the European Union urged the sides to strictly abide by this agreement and called on all actors, including external parties, to refrain from any actions that might lead to further casualties. In that respect, it notes with extreme concern the reports of continued military activities, including against civilian targets, as well as civilian casualties. The loss of human life and the heavy toll on the civilian population are unacceptable. The European Union condemns the continued violence, regardless of where it originates, and calls on the parties to put an immediate end to it.

It is vital and urgent today for the humanitarian ceasefire agreement to be fully implemented and strictly respected by the parties so that progress can be made in bringing about a permanent cessation of hostilities. It is also a priority for the parties to ensure the necessary security and logistical conditions on the ground to enable the International Committee of the Red Cross to act as an intermediary, as agreed by the parties, in the exchange of prisoners of war and other detainees and the remains of those who have died. The European Union supports the efforts to that end by the Co-Chairs of the Minsk Group and the Personal Representative of the Chairperson-in-Office.

It once again appeals to the parties to engage promptly in substantive negotiations under the auspices of the Co-Chairs of the Minsk Group without preconditions and on the basis of the agreed principles.

It reiterates its support for the work of the Co-Chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group in seeking a negotiated political solution to the conflict and will continue to promote efforts to establish lasting peace in the region.

The candidate countries the Republic of North Macedonia¹, Montenegro¹ Serbia¹ and Albania¹, the European Free Trade Association countries and members of the European Economic Area Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway, as well as the Republic of Moldova, Andorra and San Marino, align themselves with this statement.

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