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**OSCE Permanent Council Nr 928
Vienna, 1 November 2012**

EU statement on recent developments in Russia

The European Union would like to draw the attention of the Permanent Council to the statement by the spokesperson of the EU High Representative Catherine Ashton on the new law on treason in Russia, issued on 25 October 2012, in which it was stated:

“The High Representative Catherine Ashton is concerned by the adoption of the Law on treason in the Russian State Duma on 23 October.

The new law would expand the scope for prosecution of and reduce the burden of proof for charges of treason and espionage. The abstract definition of treason contained in the law will make it difficult to apply in a fair manner. It also potentially penalises contacts with foreign nationals with up to 20 years in prison.

The adoption of this law follows a number of legislative and judicial developments in the Russian Federation over the few past months. Taken together, these developments would limit the space for civil society development, and increase the scope for intimidation. We will be monitoring the implementation of this law closely.”

In addition to this statement, the EU is concerned about increasing pressure on opposition activists in Russia, including Sergei Udaltsov,

Alexei Navalny, Konstantin Lebedev and Leonid Razvozzhayev. We are also concerned about reports on ill-treatment regarding the arrest of Leonid Razvozzhayev. We call on the Russian authorities to thoroughly investigate this incident in line with commitments to international standards on the rule of law.

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 Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the EFTA country Norway, member of the European Economic Area, as well as Georgia, 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 the EFTA and of the European Economic Area.