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## **STATEMENT BY THE EUROPEAN UNION AT THE 907th MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

Vienna, 29 March 2012

### **Regarding the questions of tolerance and non-discrimination in the Republic of Moldova**

The European Union shares the concerns recently expressed in the Permanent Council by the United States of America and Norway, also on behalf of Canada, Iceland and Switzerland, regarding the decisions taken by municipal councils of cities in the Republic of Moldova aimed specifically at prohibiting the “aggressive promotion of non-traditional sexual orientations”.

The European Union recalls that human rights apply equally to every human being, regardless of his or her sexual orientation or gender identity.

The European Union believes that the decisions taken by the municipal councils of the cities of Balti and Anenii Noi and of the villages of Chetris and Hiliuti constitute infringements of human rights and discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender persons, specifically by stigmatizing them and restricting their freedom of expression and their freedom of association and assembly.

The European Union believes that these decisions fail to respect the international commitments undertaken by the Republic of Moldova, in particular within the framework of the Council of Europe and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

The European Union notes the reactions to these decisions on the part of the government representative to the municipal council of the city of Balti, the ombudsman and civil society. It also notes the appeals filed against these decisions in the country’s civil courts. The European Union calls on the Moldovan authorities to take whatever measures are necessary, as they have already pledged to do, to ensure that these decisions are not applied.

In conclusion, the European Union hopes that the OSCE will fight against all forms of discrimination, including those based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

The acceding country Croatia<sup>1</sup>, the candidate countries the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia<sup>1</sup>, Montenegro<sup>1</sup>, Iceland<sup>2</sup> and Serbia<sup>1</sup>, as well as the countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate countries Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina align themselves with this statement.

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- 1 Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.
  - 2 Iceland continues to be a member of the European Free Trade Association and of the European Economic Area.