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**EU Statement on the occasion of the centenary of the end
of World War I**

Mr. Chairman, the EU and its Member States warmly welcome the speakers to the FSC and thank them for their presentations. We also very much look forward to visiting the WWI exhibition in the Museum of Military History in Vienna and thank the Slovenian Chairmanship and the Austrian authorities for providing us with this unique opportunity.

World War I was one of the greatest tragedies ever to have afflicted the peoples of Europe and the world and cost many millions of lives. The war brought about violations of human rights and freedoms, and enormous human suffering. For the first time in the history of mankind, chemical weapons were used on a large scale basis.

Sadly, the appalling nature of the conflict did not lead to sustainable peace on the continent. Another great tragedy, World War II, followed soon afterwards and its end brought about painful divisions in Europe. We mourn all those who lost their lives as victims of the two great wars, occupations, or acts of repression.

While we honour the victims, we must strive together for a better world in which there is no need for future military conflict, and human suffering, including the suffering of innocent civilians that all wars cause.

Mr. Chairman, the European Union was created exactly with this purpose: to replace historic enmity with binding and steadfast friendships. The Union of today has evolved and adapted to contemporary circumstances, but the Coal and Steel Community and then the EEC, were created with the hope that never again would Europe be destroyed by war. The EU is built on the strong foundations of shared values and common purpose rooted in freedom, democracy, human rights and the rule of law.

We would like to underline the important role of the OSCE in advancing peace and security in Europe. The OSCE, as a regional arrangement under Chapter VIII of the

UN Charter and a multilateral forum for dialogue and negotiation, has led over the years to a number of key commitments across all three dimensions, including fundamental politico-military agreements. Its founding document, the 1975 Helsinki Final Act, contains key elements of the European security order, including the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of States, the inviolability of borders and the peaceful settlement of disputes. These principles must be respected by all OSCE participating States and, where they are violated or challenged, must be restored.

The EU and its Member States will continue to work tirelessly, including in the OSCE, to share and deepen the benefits of peace and security on this continent and beyond. We will be a common voice for adherence to international law and OSCE principles and commitments.

Mr. Chairman, we cannot change the past but we can learn its lessons. We have responsibility to shape the future wisely. One important way we can honour the memory of the World War I is to build a more cooperative international community, based on the fundamental principles of international law and the commitments we have together undertaken.

The Candidate Countries the FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO*, SERBIA* and ALBANIA*, the Country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and Potential Candidate BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA, and the EFTA country LIECHTENSTEIN, member of the European Economic Area, as well as UKRAINE, the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA, GEORGIA, ANDORRA, and SAN MARINO align themselves with this statement.

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