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EU statement

Mr Chairperson,

The European Union appreciates this opportunity for all of us to take stock of the preparations so far, and to identify where further efforts are needed to make a success of our meeting in Kyiv in early December.

The European Union reiterates its strong commitment to the OSCE, its principles and objectives enshrined in the Helsinki Final Act, the Charter of Paris and all the other documents to which we have all agreed. It is based on our joint vision that people in our region need to live together in peace and security. The realities of 1975 and 1990 have changed, but our principles and objectives, firmly rooted in the comprehensive, multi-dimensional and indivisible concept of security, remain as relevant and needed as ever in today's security environment. There can be no doubt that we all remain bound by, and committed to, its words to which our leaders have all agreed.

We have, in the OSCE a unique organisation with a wide-ranging set of commitments, strong, autonomous institutions and a broad network of field operations. When we let it, it can make a real difference to the lives of our citizens. We have opportunities to enable it to have a bigger

impact and we should make sure that, collectively, we take them. But we face some serious challenges.

Despite the efforts of successive Chairmanships, little progress has taken place in the resolution of protracted conflicts in the OSCE area. It is essential in our view that we make progress on issues of substance regarding the settlement of the conflict in the Republic of Moldova, the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and the conflict in Georgia. The EU position on each of the protracted conflicts is well-known. We continue to press for more progress in the work done by the 5+2 format, the Minsk Group co-Chairs and in the Geneva Discussions.

The European Union remains deeply concerned about the shortfalls in the implementation of commitments in the OSCE region. We recall our affirmation in Astana, that all OSCE principles and commitments are our common achievement. Shortfalls and setbacks in the implementation of OSCE commitments in individual participating States, run counter to what we collectively have agreed and undermine the Organisation as a whole. For our part, the European Union, and its Member States will take fair criticism constructively. We are ready to look at ways in which we can improve our own record, in the true spirit of this forum and at how we can engage constructively to advance a genuine dialogue on implementation. We encourage our partners to follow the same path. We also reiterate the important role of civil society, including in the context of the monitoring of the implementation of our commitments.

The participating States must allow the OSCE to adapt to the changing security context. Its norms and commitments must be strengthened in line with today's environment.

Despite these major challenges we are facing, we should not lose sight of the long-term vision of a common Security Community in the OSCE area as agreed in Astana. This vision should continue to guide our work, including in the Helsinki+ 40 process.

Mr Chairperson,

It is in our common interest to see a successful Ministerial Council which makes progress on a number of important issues for this Organisation in and across all dimensions. We have less than three weeks to secure that. We have a good basis in the draft decisions and declarations that have been tabled. We reiterate our full support for the balanced and pragmatic approach taken by the Ukrainian Chairmanship-in-Office.

We are committed to the adoption of a meaningful political declaration in Kyiv. We believe that the organisation must be able to agree a declaration on issues that are at the very core of its business, including as we mentioned earlier on protracted conflicts in its area and the implementation of commitments.

We lend our strong support to the efforts to bring the Helsinki +40 process forward. This process offers us a chance to give the OSCE political momentum and allow it to emerge stronger at the end of 2015. A declaration in line with the principles agreed upon in Dublin would help sustain the momentum and underline our support for the process and for the approach of the incoming Swiss and Serbian Chairmanships, building on the work of the Chairmanship this year. We warmly welcome

the fact that the successive Chairmanships have shown such a high degree of collective leadership, and such strong willingness to work on a joint agenda to bring the process forward.

On other cross-dimensional issues, a strong declaration on Afghanistan would reinforce the political commitments of participating States to engagement with Afghanistan in all three dimensions. The EU also supports the work on updating the Action Plan on Trafficking in Human Beings, which helps to address new trends of trafficking in Human Beings as well as the most pressing challenges. Moreover, the EU continues to support the endeavours aiming at the adoption of an OSCE-wide Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security following relevant developments in the UN-Security Council.

Mr Chairperson,

The Chairmanship has proposed a series of decisions that is balanced, realistic and considers the priorities of all participating States. The European Union hopes that there will be political willingness by all participating States to work on the basis of these drafts in order to achieve a meaningful outcome during the Kyiv Ministerial.

In the first dimension, we strongly support the on-going work on cyber security. We welcome the progress made in the Informal Working Group and believe it should be possible to agree this initial set of confidence building measures before the Ministerial Council in Kyiv. We expect that all participating States will demonstrate political will to allow the OSCE to move forward in this important area.

We support the initiatives tabled by the FSC Chairmanship and we believe that it is important to agree on clear taskings to achieve further progress in this field. We remain fully engaged in the discussions on the draft decision on 'Issues Relevant to the Forum for Security Cooperation'. We welcome the draft decision on 'Small Arms and Light Weapons and Stockpiles of Conventional Ammunition' and will continue to work on improving them; and we support work on updating the OSCE Principles Governing Non-Proliferation. We will also continue to push for sustainable OSCE work in support of UNSCR 1540.

In the second dimension, the EU is actively engaged on the Chairmanship's drafts to advance OSCE work on improving the environmental footprint of energy-related activities; and on protection of non-nuclear critical energy infrastructure. We attach considerable importance to these topics and hope these decisions, which can bring added value to the future work of the organisation, will be adopted in Kyiv.

Clear progress in the human dimension is indispensable if we are to advance towards a genuine security community. We reaffirm that respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, democracy and the rule of law is at the core of the OSCE's concept of comprehensive security.

We will work closely with the Chairmanship and other participating States in an attempt to achieve consensus in Kyiv on the draft decisions proposed. We hope that it will be possible to achieve consensus on a meaningful decision on the protection of journalists, which remains an

EU priority, building on the work done in 2012 and 2013. Last year's landmark resolution of the UNHRC on safety of journalists, which recognises the importance of all forms of media, serves as an excellent example of how globally agreed standards could be reaffirmed within the framework of OSCE commitments.

We also appreciate the Chairmanship's draft decision on the Freedom of Religion or Belief, another priority issue for the EU. This is an important individual right, which should be further strengthened and guaranteed for every person.

We are engaged in discussions on Freedom of Movement. Our approach must be based on OSCE commitments, with a clear focus on Freedom of Movement as a fundamental freedom and individual right.

Finally, the European Union supports the draft decision on enhancing OSCE efforts to implement the Action Plan on Improving the Situation of Roma and Sinti, with a particular focus on women and youth.

Mr Chairman,

The European Union is engaged in good faith, openness and a constructive spirit on all the drafts and with all our partners. We are ready to be pragmatic and constructive as long as we remain confident that our partners are acting in the same manner, pursuing the principles and objectives of this Organisation, to which we have all subscribed. We will focus on the substance and be guided by how the draft decisions can add value to our commitments and promote their implementation.

Mr Chairperson, we congratulate you and your colleagues for working tirelessly for our common interests. You can count on our determined support. We wish you – and all of us - success in Kyiv.

Thank you.

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 LIECHTENSTEIN, member of the European Economic Area, as well as the Republic of MOLDOVA, ANDORRA and SAN MARINO, align themselves with this statement.

* 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.
