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STATEMENT BY THE EUROPEAN UNION AT THE 851st MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL

Vienna, 17 February 2011

Regarding the conviction of Mr. Ilya Kazak

The European Union deplores the sentencing of Mr. Ilya Kazak by a court in the Transnistria region to 14 years' imprisonment for spying. It recalls its statement to the Permanent Council on 23 December regarding the sentencing of the journalist Ernest Vardanyan to 15 years' imprisonment for similar reasons.

The European Union does not believe that Mr. Kazak was able to enjoy all the guarantees of a just and fair trial. It notes in particular the lack of transparency in the trial and the fact that Mr. Kazak was unable to choose his lawyer freely. We call on the *de facto* authorities of the Transnistria region to ensure that Mr. Kazak's fundamental and legal rights are respected. Specifically, he must be able to contact his family regularly and receive visits while in detention.

The European Union welcomes the press release issued by the Chairperson-in-Office on 10 February 2011 and encourages the OSCE Mission to the Republic of Moldova to continue to monitor the situation as regards the judicial procedure with respect to Mr. Kazak and Mr. Vardanyan.

The European Union is particularly concerned at the negative signals sent by this latest conviction as regards respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms in the Transnistria region.

The European Union will continue to follow closely the situation regarding Mr. Kazak and Mr. Vardanyan.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

The candidate countries Turkey, Croatia¹, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia¹, Montenegro¹ and Iceland²; the Stabilisation and Association Process countries and potential candidate countries Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia; the European Free Trade Association country and member of the European Economic Area Norway; as well as Georgia and San Marino align themselves with this statement.

1 Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Montenegro continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.

2 Iceland continues to be a member of the European Free Trade Association and the European Economic Area.