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EUROPEAN UNION

**OSCE Permanent Council No. 1194
Vienna, 30 August 2018**

**EU Statement on the continued imprisonment of Ukrainian
film director Oleg Sentsov and other Ukrainian Political
Prisoners in the Russian Federation**

The European Union is deeply concerned about the continued imprisonment of Ukrainian film director Oleg Sentsov in the Russian Federation. Last week marked the 100th day of his hunger strike to protest against the incarceration of Ukrainian political prisoners by Russia. His health conditions are reported to be rapidly deteriorating.

The EU urgently calls on Russia to release Mr Sentsov immediately and unconditionally. Mr Sentsov was arrested in 2014 after expressing peaceful opposition to the illegal annexation of Crimea. He was convicted and detained in a trial that fell well short of international standards. No one should be imprisoned for their political beliefs. We also fully agree with the OSCE Representative on the Media who stated that Sentsov's continued detention is unjustified and creates a strong chilling effect for those in Crimea who have the right to express their views and opinions freely.

Pending the release of Mr Sentsov, we expect Russia to allow access to him by Ukrainian authorities, including the Ukrainian ombudsperson. We call on Russia to let an independent medical team examine him and to provide him with the appropriate treatment in an institutionalised medical facility in line with the European Court of Human Rights interim measure of the past 25th of July.

We also remain extremely concerned about the health and welfare of Volodymyr Balukh who has been on hunger strike for over 150 days. We have

seen increasingly worrying reports about the welfare and treatment of Mr Sentsov and Mr Balukh.

Over 70 other Ukrainian political prisoners are illegally detained in Crimea and the Russian Federation. The EU expects international human rights standards on the illegally annexed Crimean peninsula to be upheld and all illegally detained Ukrainian citizens on the peninsula and in Russia to be released without delay, including Oleg Sentsov, Voldomyr Balukh, Emir Hussein Kuku, Oleksandr Kolchenko, Pavlo Hryb and many others.

The Candidate Countries the FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO* and ALBANIA*, the Country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and Potential Candidate BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA, and the EFTA countries ICELAND and NORWAY, members of the European Economic Area, as well as UKRAINE and GEORGIA align themselves with this statement.

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