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Finland's EU Presidency

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EU Response to the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Montenegro, Mr. Miodrag Vlahovic

The European Union warmly welcomes the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Montenegro, Mr. Miodrag Vlahovic, to the Permanent Council, for the first time since his country's independence, and thanks him for his address.

The EU recalls the 12 June conclusions of the Council of the European Union taking note of the Declaration on the Independence of the Republic of Montenegro and deciding that the EU and its Member States would develop further their relations with the Republic of Montenegro as a sovereign, independent State.

On 17 July, the Council of the European Union noted that all EU Member States had recognised the Republic of Montenegro as a sovereign and independent state. In line with the Stabilisation and Association Process and the Thessaloniki Agenda, the Council decided to extend bilateral political dialogue at ministerial level to Montenegro.

Welcoming Montenegro's undertaking to adhere to OSCE commitments, values and principles, the EU fully supported the 21 June Ministerial Council Decision on the accession of Montenegro to the OSCE. As you, Mr Chairman, have already pointed out, it is most welcome that the new State chose the OSCE as the first Organisation that it would join.

The EU also fully supported the 29 June PC Decision establishing an OSCE Mission to Montenegro. The EU welcomes the fact that the government of Montenegro recognises the contribution of the OSCE to the promotion of stability and democracy in Montenegro and the region as a whole, and that it attaches a high value to the continuation of this work. We are confident that the excellent relations with hosts enjoyed by the former Mission to Serbia and Montenegro will continue with the Missions in both Republics. We look forward to seeing the implementation of political, social, judicial and economic reforms pursued with a fresh impetus.

Mr Chairman, in conclusion, we should like once again to thank Foreign Minister Vlahovic for addressing the Permanent Council today and to assure him that the European Union stands ready to help the Republic of Montenegro achieve its European potential.

The Acceding Countries Bulgaria and Romania, the Candidate Countries Turkey, Croatia ¹ and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, the Countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, as well as Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova align themselves with this statement.

¹ Croatia and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process