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STATEMENT BY THE EUROPEAN UNION AT THE 1149th MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL

8 June 2017

On the situation of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons in Chechnya

The European Union continues to pay close attention to the situation of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons in Chechnya. It repeats its wish for full elucidation of the allegations of arrest, illegal detention, torture and murder of persons because of their sexual orientation.

The successive replies provided by the Russian delegation to the Permanent Council, which we have listened to attentively, essentially consist of questioning the veracity of the sources of information.

The preliminary inspection launched by the Russian authorities and the announcement of the dispatch by the Russian Ombudsman for Human Rights of a mission to Chechnya mark a first acknowledgement by Russia of the seriousness of the situation.

Nevertheless, we look forward to a response by the Russian authorities commensurate with the scale of the crimes mentioned in the various reports from the media and civil society. The opening of a criminal inquiry would be a positive signal in that regard, also guaranteeing effective protection for persons at risk of persecution.

The perpetrators must be brought to justice. We appeal to Russia to fully implement its international commitments, including those within the OSCE, and to ensure respect for the principles of equality and non-discrimination for all.

We also appeal to the Russian authorities to facilitate independent inquiries by journalists or human rights defenders. In that regard, we have raised the case of Elena Milashina from *Novaya Gazeta*.

The candidate countries the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia¹, Montenegro¹ and Albania¹, the country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Free Trade Association countries and members of the European Economic Area Iceland and Norway, as well as Ukraine, Georgia, San Marino, Australia and Canada, align themselves with this statement.

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