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## **STATEMENT BY THE EUROPEAN UNION AT THE 1286th MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

22 October 2020

### **On the situation in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict zone**

The European Union urges Armenia and Azerbaijan to adhere strictly and unconditionally to the humanitarian ceasefire they announced for 00.00 hours local time on 18 October following mediation by France in close co-ordination with the other Co-Chair countries of the Minsk Group. It remains extremely concerned by reports that military activities are nevertheless continuing in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict zone and beyond.

In that regard, the European Union expresses its great concern at the suffering of the civilian populations and condemns in the strongest terms the continued violence, which is unacceptable regardless of where it originates. It is disturbed at the exacerbation of the conflict and the risks of a humanitarian crisis that would have a serious impact on the entire region.

It urges the parties to ensure rapid and safe access to the conflict zone by the International Committee of the Red Cross without delay or hindrance in accordance with the mediation they agreed to on 10 October. It supports the efforts to that end by the Co-Chairs of the Minsk Group and the Personal Representative of the Chairperson-in-Office.

It reiterates its full support for the work of the Co-Chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group in their substantive negotiations and search for a negotiated political solution to the conflict. It advocates the organization of additional briefings between the Co-Chairs and the Personal Representative of the Chairperson-in-Office and expresses its willingness to further support such efforts.

It remains committed to efforts to establish lasting peace in the region and strongly emphasizes that a negotiated solution is the only way to achieve a peaceful and lasting settlement of the conflict.

The candidate countries the Republic of North Macedonia<sup>1</sup>, Montenegro<sup>1</sup>, Serbia<sup>1</sup> and Albania<sup>1</sup>, the European Free Trade Association countries and members of the European Economic Area Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway, as well as the Republic of Moldova, Andorra and San Marino, align themselves with this statement.

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<sup>1</sup> The Republic of North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.