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STATEMENT BY THE EUROPEAN UNION AT THE 745th MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL

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Regarding freedom of assembly in Russia

The European Union regrets the hindrances caused by the local authorities in Moscow and St. Petersburg to the progress of the “protest marches” organized on 14 December by several opposition movements. It draws attention to the disproportionate response of the law enforcement forces to these meetings, as was demonstrated by the high number of comments.

Recalling that freedom of assembly is an essential element of any democratic society, the European Union urges Russia to comply with its relevant OSCE commitments.

The candidate countries Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*, the countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate countries Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro, the European Free Trade Association countries and members of the European Economic Area Iceland and Norway, as well as Georgia, align themselves with this statement.

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