



PC.DEL/670/16  
13 May 2016

ENGLISH only

**EUROPEAN UNION**

**OSCE Permanent Council Nr 1100  
Vienna, 12 May 2016**

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**EU Statement on 71 years since the end of the Second  
World War in Europe and Europe Day**

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World War II was one of the greatest tragedies ever to have afflicted the peoples of Europe and the world and took tens of millions of lives. The war brought about violations of human rights and freedoms, as well as crimes against peace, war crimes, and crimes against humanity. We mourn all those who lost their lives as victims of the war, the Holocaust, occupations, or acts of repression.

We pay our earnest tribute to the historic role of the allied forces and their sacrifices in the defeat of Nazism during the World War II. However, likewise, we should remember that the World War II brought about painful divisions in Europe. For many European countries, the end of the World War II did not bring freedom, but more crimes against humanity committed against their people.

An honest and thorough research on the history of the Second World War contributes to reconciliation. Given our responsibility, towards all victims, past and present, we should avoid using, for extraneous purposes, divisive and selected approaches. In this regard, we condemn one-sided interpretations of history and attempts to justify the Ribbentrop-Molotov pact.

As we commemorate the victims of the World War II, we cannot forget that peace is still not a reality on the whole of the European continent. Russia's violations of international law and the fundamental principles of the UN and the OSCE in the context of the crisis in and around Ukraine, including the illegal annexation of Crimea and Sevastopol and its destabilising actions in eastern Ukraine have seriously harmed the vision of peace in Europe.

Mr Chairman, on 9 May we celebrate Europe Day. Too often one forgets why the European Union was created. The Union of today has evolved and adapted to contemporary circumstances, but the Coal and Steel Community, and then the European Economic Community, were created with the hope that never again would Europe be destroyed by war. Today, the European Union is built on strong foundations of shared values and common purpose, rooted in freedom and democracy. Born from the will of six founding nations, the EU now counts 28 Member States and five countries are candidates for EU membership. The process of enlargement of the EU shows in itself the success of what we have achieved.

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 country NORWAY, member of the European Economic Area, as well as UKRAINE, the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA, GEORGIA, ANDORRA and SAN MARINO align themselves with this statement.

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