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**OSCE Permanent Council Nr 943
Vienna, 7 March 2013**

**EU statement on the occasion of International Women's
Day**

The EU wishes to thank the Chairmanship-in-Office for highlighting the importance of International Women's Day, to be celebrated tomorrow, March 8th. I am pleased to inform you that High Representative Catherine Ashton, will issue a statement on the occasion of the International Women's Day. The statement will be forwarded to the delegations as it becomes available.

The UN theme chosen for this year's International Women's Day, namely "A promise is a promise: Time for action to end violence against women", is timely. Violence against women is arguably the most widespread human rights violation of our time. It is a phenomenon that affects all societies and takes many gruesome forms.

Also here within the OSCE area, combating violence against women remains a crucial endeavour. In this regard, we stress the need to implement MC.DEC/15/05 on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women, including by developing programmes and activities aimed at the prevention of all forms of gender-based violence.

Finally, we wish to highlight the importance of implementing UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security. We support continued discussions on the development of an OSCE-Wide Action Plan on the implementation of UNSCR 1325.

The Acceding Country Croatia*, the Candidate Countries the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*, Montenegro*, Iceland+ and Serbia*, the Countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as the Republic of Moldova, Armenia, Georgia, Andorra and San Marino, align themselves with this statement.

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

+ Iceland continues to be a member of the EFTA and of the European Economic Area.