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**EU Statement in response to the Address by the Deputy  
Foreign Minister for Economic Co-operation of  
Afghanistan, H.E. Adela Raz**

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The European Union warmly welcomes H.E. Deputy Foreign Minister Adela Raz to the Permanent Council and wants to thank her for her presentation. We also want to thank you again for the key note address you delivered during yesterday's Asian Contact Group meeting on Afghanistan. We welcome your presence here today because developments in Afghanistan remain an important topic for discussion, also at the OSCE.

On 4 and 5 October the European Union and the government of Afghanistan co-hosted the Brussels Conference on Afghanistan, bringing together 75 countries and 26 international organisations and agencies. At this Conference, the international community pledged the impressive amount of 13,6 billion euros for Afghanistan's future development, with the EU and its member states pledging 5 billion euros making the EU, as a whole, the largest development cooperation partner of Afghanistan.

The main messages expressed by the participants were that stability of the National Unity Government must be maintained, that progress on electoral reform and the fight against corruption and illicit drug trafficking is needed and that reform of the Afghan administration, economy and governance must be pursued with respect for human rights and the rights of women and girls. At the Conference the Afghan government presented the reform programme it plans to implement over the next four years in support of strong Afghan-led state and institution building, against the backdrop of a deteriorating security situation. The Conference highlighted that continued external support is an essential condition for peaceful and sustainable development in Afghanistan.

On the eve of the Conference, the EU High Representative gathered some key regional players at ministerial level, including India, Iran, China and Pakistan, underlining the importance of regional support for the political process. HR Mogherini also co-chaired the side event 'Empowered Women – Prosperous Afghanistan', which also featured First Lady Rula Ghani, while another side event was dedicated to intensifying regional economic and trade cooperation.

We also welcome the fact that prior to this Conference, after months of negotiations, the 'EU-Afghanistan Joint Way Forward on migration issues' was signed and that a Senior Officials' Dialogue on Migration took place, providing an opportunity to discuss future cooperation on return, readmission and reintegration of migrants. We are looking forward to holding the first meeting of the Joint Working Group on these matters in the near future.

The EU and its member states have always been and remain supportive of an OSCE role aimed at establishing stability and security in Afghanistan, e.g. by providing voluntary financial contributions to OSCE projects related to Afghanistan, notably in the field of training Afghan border guards and police officers, education and capacity building. In this context we commend the activities of the OSCE field presences in Central Asia, in particular the Border Management Staff College in Dushanbe and the OSCE Academy in Bishkek. In order to put its activities on a more sustainable footing, we remain of the opinion that the BMSC should be funded from the OSCE Unified Budget.

Finally, we would be interested to learn about your ideas on the prospects for regional economic cooperation and to what extent, in your view, the OSCE could play a role in this regard. Madam Deputy Minister, we wish you all success in your future, challenging work.

The Candidate Countries the FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA\*, MONTENEGRO\*, SERBIA\* and ALBANIA\*, the Country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and Potential Candidate BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA, and the EFTA countries ICELAND and NORWAY, members of the European Economic Area, as well as UKRAINE, the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA and GEORGIA align themselves with this statement.

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