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Declaration by the High Representative on behalf of the EU on "elections" in eastern Ukraine

The EU considers the holding of "presidential and parliamentary elections" in Donetsk and Luhansk "People's Republics" on 2 November as illegal and illegitimate and will not recognise them. These so-called "elections", as well as any acknowledgement or recognition of them, are in breach of the letter and the spirit of the Minsk Protocol and we call on Russia to assume its responsibility in this regard. The EU calls on all sides to work towards early local elections in these parts of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions in accordance with Ukrainian law, as foreseen in the Minsk Protocol, as the only legal and legitimate means of renewing the democratic mandate of the local authorities.

In order to find a sustainable political solution to the crisis in eastern Ukraine through dialogue, the EU urges all parties to fully implement the Minsk Protocol and Memorandum swiftly and without further delay. It once again underlines the Russian Federation's responsibility in this context and calls in particular for a withdrawal of illegal and foreign forces, mercenaries and military equipment, as well as for securing the Ukrainian-Russian border with permanent monitoring under the OSCE verification. It recalls that a solution to the crisis can only be based on the respect of Ukraine's national sovereignty and territorial integrity.

The EU is particularly worried about continuing violation of the ceasefire, the resulting losses of lives and increasing numbers of internally displaced persons. The EU will continue to provide humanitarian assistance and calls on all parties to facilitate distribution of aid to populations in need, on the basis of non-discrimination, cooperation with established humanitarian actors and with the consent of competent national authorities.

The Candidate Countries Turkey, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*, Montenegro*, Iceland* and Albania*, the country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the EFTA countries Liechtenstein and Norway, members of the European Economic Area, as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and Georgia align themselves with this declaration.

* The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Albania 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.