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**DECLARATION BY THE PRESIDENCY ON BEHALF OF THE EUROPEAN UNION  
CONCERNING CHECHNYA**

The European Union is following the continuing fighting in Chechnya with the greatest concern. The promised ceasefires are not having any effect on the ground. Serious violations of human rights and international humanitarian law are continuing. The European Union strongly deplores the large number of victims and the suffering being inflicted on the civilian population.

The European Union, which attaches importance to its relations with Russia and is concerned in this regard at the possible consequences of the crisis, would stress that these relations must be based on the principles jointly supported by the United Nations and the OSCE as confirmed in the Partnership Agreement.

The European Union supports the declaration by the OSCE Presidency at the Permanent Council meeting on 12 January. It welcomes the fact that Russia has accepted OSCE assistance in the process of finding a solution to the crisis and that Russia is prepared to devote further discussion to ways and means of ensuring practical cooperation