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

The European Union continues to be seriously concerned about the situation in Chechnya. It notes, however, that the two sides have agreed a ceasefire, and that this ceasefire now appears to be broadly in place. It notes also that discussions between the two sides have taken place. The EU would encourage the parties to move now to build on these positive developments and continue negotiations.

The EU remains especially concerned about the conditions of the civilian population. It considers that, while there has been some improvement in that situation on the ground, more needs to be done in this regard. It would therefore urge both sides to ensure that the necessary measures are taken to facilitate the unhindered carrying out of their work by the humanitarian organisations on the ground.

The EU again expresses its firm belief that the situation in Chechnya cannot be solved by military means and that a settlement can only be achieved by negotiations. The EU reiterates its view that the OSCE Assistance Group can make an important contribution in this regard.