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Declaration by the High Representative, Catherine Ashton, on behalf of the European Union on Zimbabwe

"The European Union is committed to supporting the peaceful progress and democratic development of the people of Zimbabwe. It reaffirms its support for the full implementation of the Global Political Agreement (GPA) which allowed the creation of the Government of National Unity. It also welcomes progress made towards the creation of a conducive environment for the holding of free, fair, peaceful and transparent elections through the development of the Road Map sponsored by SADC. It pays tribute to the efforts of SADC and the South African Facilitator in accompanying the Zimbabwean Government along that road.

In recognition of these developments and to encourage further progress in the implementation of the GPA, the EU has today decided to remove 51 individuals and 20 entities from the visa ban and the asset freeze list with immediate effect. 112 individuals and 11 entities who are still considered to be involved in or associated with policies and activities that undermine human rights, democracy and the rule of law will remain subject to the measures.

We have also decided to extend the restrictions on development assistance for only six months with a view to begin preparing for enhanced cooperation as and when these measures can be lifted. Despite the restrictions, since the establishment of the GNU, the EU has provided close to US\$ 1 billion in development assistance to address the needs of the Zimbabwean people, including in the provision of health care and education services. The EU remains the largest contributor of development assistance and stands ready to maintain appropriate levels of funding over the next year.

As the second largest trading partner to Zimbabwe, trade between the EU and Zimbabwe has almost doubled since 2009, fostering economic recovery and much needed jobs. We look forward to strengthening this trade relationship as the economic environment improves.

P R E S S

The EU reaffirms its desire to engage in a serious political dialogue with Zimbabwe. To facilitate this process we have also suspended travel restrictions on the two ZANU-PF members of the Zimbabwean Ministerial Re-engagement Team so that the full team can come to Brussels for high-level consultations.

Whilst we note that the overall situation in Zimbabwe has improved, further political reforms in accordance with the commitments in the GPA are necessary for a democratic and peaceful Zimbabwe. The EU remains ready to reconsider the measures at any time in response to concrete progress in the implementation of the GPA and the preparation of credible and peaceful elections.

Such elections, to be held in accordance with the SADC guidelines and principles for the conduct of elections should allow the creation of a Government reflecting the freely expressed wishes of the people of Zimbabwe. The EU will recognise and work with any government formed as the result of such a process."

The Acceding Country Croatia*, the Candidate Countries Turkey, 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, and the EFTA countries Liechtenstein and Norway, members of the European Economic Area, as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, Armenia and Georgia align themselves with this declaration.

* 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