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Declaration by the High Representative Catherine Ashton on behalf of the European Union on the establishment by China of an 'East China Sea Air Defence Identification Zone'

The EU is concerned to learn of China's decision to establish an 'East China Sea Air Defence Identification Zone' as well as the accompanying announcement by the Chinese Ministry of Defence of "emergency defence measures" in case of non-compliance. This development heightens the risk of escalation and contributes to raising tensions in the region. The EU calls on all sides to exercise caution and restraint.

With its significant interests in the region, the EU is following these developments closely. The legitimate use of sea and airspace are rights enshrined in international law and are essential for security, stability and prosperity. Actions that bring or appear to bring these rights into question are not conducive to finding lasting solutions to the differences that exist in East Asia's maritime areas. The EU calls upon all parties to take steps to calm the situation, to promote trust building measures and reach out diplomatically to seek peaceful, cooperative solutions according to international law, in order to defuse tensions and resolve differences constructively.

The Candidate Countries Turkey and Montenegro*, and the Countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina, align themselves with this declaration.

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* Montenegro continues to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.