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Declaration by the High Representative on behalf of the EU on respect for the rules-based order in cyberspace

The European Union and its Member States are firm promoters of an open, stable and secure cyberspace, respectful of human rights, fundamental freedoms and the rule of law. Cyberspace offers significant opportunities for social, political and economic development.

The European Union and its Member States are concerned by the rise in malicious behaviour in cyberspace that aim at undermining the EU's integrity, security and economic competitiveness, including increasing acts of cyber-enabled theft of intellectual property. The misuse of Information and Communications Technologies (ICTs) could lead to destabilising and cascading effects with enhanced risks of conflict.

The European Union and its Member States urge actors to stop undertaking such malicious activities, and call on all partners to strengthen international cooperation to promote security and stability in cyberspace. They are determined to pursue actions aimed at neutralising such malicious activities and keen to enhance cooperation with international partners to this effect.

The European Union and its Member States are continuously monitoring and addressing the challenges that cyberspace poses both internally as well as to their foreign and security policy. Their efforts aim at strengthening cyber resilience, increasing awareness of businesses and citizens as well as responding through the use of diplomatic measures.

In order to keep cyberspace open, stable and secure, the international community needs to increase its efforts to tackle malicious cyber activities, and guide its own use of ICTs by the application of existing international law in cyberspace, as well as through the adherence to the norms, rules and principles of responsible state behaviour as articulated in the cumulative reports from the UN Group of Governmental Experts in the field of Information and Communications Technologies (ICTs) in the Context of International Security (UNGGE). In this regard, states should not knowingly allow their territory to be used for malicious activities using ICTs as it is stated in the 2015 report of the UNGGE.

The European Union and its Member States are strongly committed to the existing consensus in this context, and to the further discussions in the United Nations, as well as to the commitments made with regard to the protection of intellectual property against cyber-enabled theft in multilateral fora such as G20, or through the Paris call for Trust and Security in Cyberspace, supported by all Member States.

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

* - North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.

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