STATEMENT

by the Spokesperson on the announcement of a provisional agreement on illicit drugs between the Government of Colombia and the FARC

"We welcome the announcement of a provisional agreement between the Colombian Government and the FARC on the question of illicit drugs reached at the talks in Havana, aimed to end the longstanding conflict in the country. This is an important step towards peace, security and progress in Colombia, further reinforced by the agreement also reached on demining issues.

The drugs trade has weakened political and social structures in Colombia for too long, fuelled insecurity and caused suffering. We are encouraged by the clear rejection of all links to it and by the common determination to fight it in all its dimensions. Dismantling the drugs economy will benefit the entire region and enable Colombia to reap the full advantages of peace and security.

The EU continues to support the Havana peace talks and strongly encourages the parties to continue discussions on the two remaining chapters in the same constructive spirit, with a view of reaching an early overall agreement to ensure stable and sustainable peace for the Colombian people. We are ready to assist them in this process as well as in the implementation of a final, overall agreement.

The announcement by the FARC and the ELN of a unilateral truce in the week ahead of the presidential elections is a further welcome step, allowing the Colombian people to exercise freely and in security their democratic rights. We call on the FARC and the ELN to extend this truce indefinitely as a sign of their commitment to end the conflict and pursue their goals by political means. In this respect, we hope that the ELN will also soon engage in peace talks."

FOR FURTHER DETAILS:
Michael Mann +32 498 999 780 - +32 2 584 9780 - Michael.Mann@eeas.europa.eu @EUHighRepSpox
Maja Kocijancic +32 498 984 425 - +32 2 298 65 70 - Maja.Kocijancic@ec.europa.eu @AshtonSpox Maja
Sebastien Brabant +32 460 75 09 98 - Sebastien.Brabant@ec.europa.eu
Maria Lyra Traversa +32 2 2956368 Maria-Lyra.TRAVERSA@ec.europa.eu
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