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Declaration by High Representative Catherine Ashton on behalf of the European Union in support of ratification of the new strategic arms reduction treaty (START)

The United States and Russia have shown vision and leadership in signing the new START treaty on 8 April this year. This landmark treaty represents remarkable progress in the fulfilment by the United States and Russia of their disarmament commitments. It contributed to the successful outcome of the 2010 NPT Review Conference leading to the adoption of an action plan on the three pillars of the NPT, including disarmament.

The United States and Russia, which possess 95% of the global stockpile of nuclear weapons, now have the historic opportunity to follow up their international commitments and to enhance security by reducing the number of deployed strategic warheads and their delivery systems and by establishing a verification system to the benefit of both sides.

The ratification of the new START treaty will strengthen arms control and the global non-proliferation regime. The European Union has long stressed the need for a comprehensive approach to all these issues. A combined effort by the international community is required to strengthen disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation, which are joint security interests for all.

In this context, the European Union gives its full support to efforts of the Governments of the United States and Russia and looks forward to the swift ratification and implementation of the new START treaty.