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Declaration by the High Representative, Catherine Ashton, on behalf of the European Union on the occasion of the International Criminal Court judgment in the case of Mr. Thomas Lubanga Dyilo

Today’s verdict of the International Criminal Court in the case of Mr. Lubanga Dyilo constitutes a milestone for international criminal justice. It is the first verdict of the Court, which started its operations in 2003. This judgment constitutes a significant achievement for the Court in its task of ensuring respect for, and enforcement of, international justice. At the same time, this verdict offers an opportunity for the International Criminal Court to reflect on the proceedings and analyze lessons learnt.

The verdict demonstrates that perpetrators cannot act with impunity. It resonates far beyond the Democratic Republic of the Congo, as the trial of Mr. Lubanga has raised awareness about the plight of child soldiers and the fact that recruiting and using children under 15 in combat is a war crime. It is to be underlined that the International Criminal Court is a fully independent judicial institution and that providing for a fair trial is at its core. In July this year, we will celebrate the 10th anniversary of the entry into force of the Court’s founding treaty, the Rome Statute. The European Union has been a strong supporter of the International Criminal Court since the adoption of its founding Treaty in 1998. The Court enjoys broad support with 120 states parties from all regions in the world.
The Acceding Country Croatia*, the Candidate Countries 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.