Statement by Catherine Ashton, EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs, on ratification by the U.S. Senate of the START Treaty

"I congratulate the U.S. Senate on their ratification of the new Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) with Russia. In approving the treaty today, the Senate has shown the necessary vision and leadership which will allow the United States and Russia -- which possess 95 percent of global stockpile of nuclear weapons -- to make progress in fulfilling their disarmament commitments set in this landmark agreement.

I now look forward to the further ratification by the Russian parliament which will give both countries an historic opportunity to enhance global 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."

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