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Statement by Catherine Ashton, European Union High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, on ratification by the Russian Federation Council of the START Treaty

Catherine Ashton, the EU High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the Commission, made the following statement today:

"I congratulate the Russian State Duma and Federation Council on their ratification of the new Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) with the US.

In approving the treaty today, the Russian parliament has paved the way for 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.

Both countries are showing that they are willing 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 reiterates its full support to efforts of the Governments of the United States and Russia."

P R E S S

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