Statement by High Representative/Vice-President Federica Mogherini and Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management Christos Stylianides on the World Humanitarian Day 2018

On the 15th anniversary of the bombing of the UN Headquarters in Baghdad, the European Union pays tribute to the commitment of aid workers who risk their lives to deliver humanitarian aid worldwide.The unequivocal respect of international law, the safety and security of humanitarian workers and their unfettered access to those in need are a major concern for the European Union.

Ahead of the 2018 World Humanitarian Day, High Representative/Vice-President Federica **Mogherini** and Christos **Stylianides**, EU Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management, made the following statement:

"Civilians often pay the highest price in conflict, and attacks, including against aid workers, continue to happen.

Over the past year, from Afghanistan to Nigeria and from the Central African Republic to Yemen, these attacks have claimed the lives of civilians and humanitarian workers. These acts of violence are a grave violation of International Humanitarian Law. Saving lives should not cost lives.

Almost 4,400 humanitarian workers have been victims of major attacks over the past two decades. Over one third of them were killed. World Humanitarian Day is an opportunity to honour these dedicated humanitarians, and to advocate for their safety and security.

All parties to conflicts have an obligation under International Humanitarian Law to ensure the safety of humanitarian workers, and to facilitate unhindered and sustained humanitarian access, so that assistance can reach all people in need.

The EU is a world leader in humanitarian assistance. Promoting principled humanitarian aid and respect for International Humanitarian Law remains at the core of our international engagement."

Background

Civilians in conflict zones are routinely killed or wounded in targeted or indiscriminate attacks. Conflict has forced record numbers of people to flee their homes, with more than 68.5 million people forcibly displaced worldwide, half of them being children under the age of 18.

In 2017, the EU mobilised more than €2.43 billion for humanitarian aid operations in over 80 countries around the world. A significant proportion of this went tosupporting the conflict-affected populations inside Syria and refugees in neighbouring countries and regions. The EU has also continued to support those displaced by long-standing conflicts, from Afghanistan to Colombia and the Horn of Africa, while responding to emerging crises, such as the displacement of the Rohingya.

The sharp increase in deliberate breaches of International Humanitarian Law (IHL) and the humanitarian principles has made protection a prime challenge in today's humanitarian contexts. In 2017, more than 10% of the EU humanitarian aid budget was allocated for humanitarian protection activities.

The EU continued to advocate for enhancing protection and compliance with IHL, including through dialogue, statements and initiatives, as well as through funding for IHL training for staff and partners, and IHL dissemination and awareness raising activities across the general public.

For example, with the support of the EU, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) developed the ['Health-Care in Danger' campaign](#)which raises awareness of the widespread and severe impact of violent acts that obstruct the delivery of health care, damage or destroy facilities or vehicles, and injure or kill healthcare workers and patients.