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**Changes to legislation:** There are currently no known outstanding effects for the Council Decision of 7 August 2012 extending the validity of Decision 2012/96/EU and suspending the application of the appropriate measures set out in Decision 2002/148/EC (2012/470/EU), ANNEX. (See end of Document for details)

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## ANNEX

### LETTER TO THE PRESIDENT OF ZIMBABWE

In a letter dated 19 February 2002, the European Union informed you of its decision to conclude the consultations held under Article 96 of the Cotonou Agreement and to take appropriate measures within the meaning of Article 96(2)(c) of that Agreement. In a letter dated 23 February 2012, the European Union informed you of its decision to further extend the period of application of those measures until 20 August 2012.

The European Union is encouraged by the progress that is being made in implementing the Global Political Agreement by the Government of National Unity in Zimbabwe. The European Union reiterates the great importance it attaches to the political dialogue provided for in Article 8 of the Cotonou Agreement and which, at the request of the Government of Zimbabwe, was officially launched at the EU-Zimbabwe Ministerial Troika in June 2009 in Brussels. As agreed by both parties, the main objective of the Article 8 dialogue is to normalise EU-Zimbabwe relations along with the implementation of the reforms foreseen in the Global Political Agreement and to pave the way for peaceful and credible elections.

The European Union welcomes the constructive dialogue that has been established in the process of EU re-engagement with all parties in the Government of National Unity, including through the meeting in May this year between High Representative Ashton and the members of the Zimbabwe Ministerial Re-engagement Committee. The European Union welcomes the continued commitment of SADC to support the implementation of the Global Political Agreement, as expressed at the recent extraordinary SADC Summit in Luanda.

The steps taken by the Government of National Unity to improve the freedom and prosperity of the Zimbabwean people justify the immediate suspension of the measures hitherto applied under Article 96 of the Cotonou Agreement. This will allow the European Union to work directly with the Government of National Unity and to develop new assistance programmes for the benefit of the people of Zimbabwe under the next European Development Fund. In this context, and in line with efforts supporting Zimbabwe's re-engagement with the international financial institutions and the signing of an interim Economic Partnership Agreement, the European Investment Bank also envisages to re-launch development activities with the private sector in Zimbabwe.

The European Union welcomes the recent visit to Zimbabwe of the UN HCHR at the invitation of the Government of National Unity. The European Union attaches the utmost importance to the provisions of Article 9 of the Cotonou Agreement, since respect for human rights, democratic institutions and the rule of law constitutes the essential basis of EU-Zimbabwe relations and the European Union will continue to closely follow the situation in Zimbabwe. It recognises the improvement that has been achieved in the human rights situation although significant areas of concern remain.

As indicated in February this year and consistent with its incremental approach, the European Union will further adjust its policy to recognise progress as it is made by the Zimbabwean parties along the SADC roadmap.

The European Union reaffirms its partnership with the people of Zimbabwe. The present European Union decision to suspend the application of the appropriate measures and re-engage in further dialogue and cooperation with the Government of National Unity is intended to provide additional impetus in enhancing EU-Zimbabwe relations, with the aim of normalising bilateral relations. The European Union calls on all parties to seize the momentum to complete implementation of the Global Political Agreement.

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Yours faithfully,

*For the Council*

C. ASHTON

*For the Commission*

A. PIEBALGS

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