



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Permanent Council No. 1245 Vienna, 31 October 2019

EU Statement in response to the President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly

The European Union warmly welcomes the President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, Mr. George Tsereteli, back to the Permanent Council.

We welcome the continuation of the practice of receiving the President of the Parliamentary Assembly at the Permanent Council two times throughout the year, both at the beginning and towards the end of each Chairmanship, as a sign of synergy and dialogue within our Organization. We also took positive note of the first ever ordinary session of the Parliamentary Assembly held in a Partner country, namely in Morocco, earlier this month. This significant event, as well as the presence of the PA at the Mediterranean Conference in Tirana last week, indicates the particular attention the Parliamentary Assembly dedicates to the Mediterranean. We appreciate your continuous commitment to support the OSCE's Mediterranean and Asian partnerships.

The EU highly values the cooperation between the Parliamentary Assembly and participating States. The contribution that members of parliaments can make to achieve our common goals is crucial to allow a deeper implementation of OSCE principles and commitments. We welcome the new practice of joint press releases by the PA President and Secretary General together with the SG and the CiO, which strengthens the Organisation's joint messaging on critical issues in the OSCE region. We fully subscribe to your call for the full implementation of the principles enshrined in the Helsinki Final Act, the Paris Charter and other OSCE solemn documents.

Unfortunately, such values and principles continue to be under attack. We share your concern for the continuous erosion of the European security architecture, due to – please allow me to quote you – “selfish unilateral action that shows deep disrespect for partners”. The conflict in eastern Ukraine, now well into its sixth year, continues to cause enormous human suffering to those living in conflict-affected areas. The EU recalls its unwavering support to the sovereignty, territorial integrity, unity and independence of Ukraine within its internationally recognised borders, and calls upon Russia to do likewise. Russia’s illegal annexation of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol, which we condemn and will not recognize, and the destabilization of eastern Ukraine continue to violate fundamental OSCE principles and commitments and remain the most serious security challenge Europe is facing. We take note of some positive developments, such as the adherence to the disengagement of forces and repair works in Stanytsia Luhanska and the disengagement started in Zolote area at 12.00 on Tuesday, 29 October, and we share your view that every window of opportunity should be seized to reach a sustainable, political solution to the conflict; we welcome your forthcoming visit to Kyiv in this regard. The EU remains firm in its call on all sides to swiftly and fully implement the Minsk agreements and honour their commitments in full.

We thank you for recalling the fundamental role of OSCE autonomous institutions and field operations in promoting comprehensive security in the OSCE region. The OSCE Special Monitoring Mission, the largest of them, must have safe, secure, unconditional and unimpeded access throughout Ukraine, and be allowed to carry out its mandate effectively, without being hindered or intimidated.

The peaceful settlement of the protracted conflicts in the Republic of Moldova, in Georgia, and of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict remains a key priority for the European Union and enhanced efforts should be made at all levels to strengthen political will in order to make tangible progress for conflict resolution based on principles and norms of the OSCE and international law. Protracted conflicts deserve our joint and continued attention. In this regard, we believe that parliamentarians can contribute to creating the best conditions for the settlement of such conflicts, especially in strengthening political will in order to make tangible progress. Your frequent contacts with the leaderships of Armenia, Azerbaijan and the Republic of Moldova and your planned visit to Yerevan are important contributions to this end.

Mr. President, the Luxemburg declaration of last July, and the resolutions there adopted, indicate that our priorities are aligned. The call to full adherence and implementation of core principles of the OSCE, as well as the need to strengthen dialogue, multilateralism, and measures to contrast the erosion of trust among participating States continue to be of key importance for the EU.

We are fully aware that elections are an essential element in our democratic societies. For this reason, we highly appreciate the contribution of the Parliamentary Assembly to election observation. Its role in this domain remains crucial, as it contributes to ensuring that elections are held in accordance with OSCE commitments and international standards. In this regard, we reiterate our strong support for ODIHR's methodology in observing elections, as a gold standard that is internationally recognized, and the independent, impartial and professional manner in which it is implemented by the Parliamentary Assembly, in partnership with ODIHR.

We stress the importance the EU and its Member States attach to the human dimension as a key priority in the OSCE, as lasting security cannot be sustained without full respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, democracy and rule of law. We therefore welcome that the Luxemburg declaration and the respective resolutions indicate clearly that the parliamentarians of OSCE participating States prioritize the challenges related to this dimension, and their intention to tackle them proactively. We are aware of the ongoing and increasing challenges posed to our societies; thus, our OSCE commitments are more relevant than ever, and the Parliamentary Assembly can contribute significantly to the efforts needed to tackle these challenges. We therefore support your decision to appoint a Special Representative on Civil Society Engagement, to enhance MP's participation in events such as the Human Dimension Implementation Meeting.

We also appreciate the gender perspective adopted by the Parliamentary Assembly in Luxemburg, as gender equality must remain at the top of our shared agendas. The systematic inclusion of a gender perspective should be part of all OSCE activities and programs, in accordance with our commitments in this regard, as it was mentioned in the Luxemburg Declaration which recalled the UN Security Council Resolution 1325, and the OSCE's Action Plan on the Promotion of Gender Equality.

We welcome the provisions included in the Luxemburg documents and the lively debate in Marrakech concerning sustainable development, which includes energy security and climate change. This shows the increasing importance of focusing on these issues in order to deepen our work on topics such as good governance and sustainability, which are an integral part of the OSCE's comprehensive approach to security.

We appreciate the work carried out by the various PA committees and special representatives to address specific cross-cutting issues or geographical areas that can truly benefit from parliamentary attention. In this regard, we see opportunities for convergence and for enhancing shared political messages. Two positive instances are the PA Ad Hoc Committee on Countering Terrorism, which supports participating States and closely works with the OSCE Secretariat and institutions, and the Ad Hoc Committee on Migration, which contributes significantly to OSCE's work in this domain.

In concluding, President Tsereteli, we wish to assure you that the EU will continue to be attentive to always better utilize occasions for effective cooperation between the parliamentary and the intergovernmental dimensions of the OSCE.

The Candidate Countries REPUBLIC of NORTH MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO*and ALBANIA*, the EFTA countries ICELAND and LIECHTENSTEIN, members of the European Economic Area, as well as UKRAINE, the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA, GEORGIA, ANDORRA and SAN MARINO align themselves with this statement.

* Republic of North Macedonia, Montenegro, and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.