



## EUROPEAN UNION

### OSCE Permanent Council Nr 1045 Vienna, 19 March 2015

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#### **EU Statement in Response to the Head of the OSCE Mission to Montenegro, H.E. Ambassador Janina Hřebíčková**

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The European Union and its Member States warmly welcome H.E. Ambassador Janina Hřebíčková, Head of the OSCE Mission to Montenegro, to the Permanent Council. We thank Ambassador Hřebíčková for her report, outlining the highlights of the Mission's work in the reporting period and identifying priorities for its future work.

The EU welcomes the progress Montenegro has made in the EU accession negotiations and in pursuing its ambitious internal reforms agenda. The European Union encourages Montenegro to keep the positive momentum and ensure multi-party support for the reform process.

The EU emphasizes the importance of continuing efforts in the area of the rule of law, in particular in the fight against corruption and organised crime, the judiciary and fundamental rights, as well as on law enforcement, trafficking in human beings, cyber security, anti-terrorism and anti-money laundering. Effective implementation of recently adopted laws in the prevention and fight against corruption will help to achieve concrete results. We commend the OSCE Mission for its valuable support to these matters.

Further efforts are needed to guarantee freedom of expression and of the media, including safety of journalists. We welcome the cooperation of Montenegro and the Mission with the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media Dunja Mijatović in this regard and on strengthening media self-regulation.

Constructive political dialogue between all political parties in Parliament is important to ensure trust in the electoral process and in state institutions.

While new electoral legislation already fulfils several OSCE/ODIHR recommendations, we encourage the implementation of all recommendations.

We welcome the Mission's intention to focus on a cross-programmatic and cross-dimensional approach in order to encourage a broader participation of civil society in the overall reform process in the country. Civil society can continue to contribute considerably to this process.

As a future chair of the Forum for Security Co-operation, Montenegro will have the opportunity to contribute to further strengthening OSCE commitments in the politico-military dimension and supporting their full implementation and modernisation.

We commend the Mission's support in the area of demilitarisation. The MONDEM Programme is an extra-budgetary project financed by the European Union, many EU Member States as well as other OSCE participating States. It has been extended until the end of 2016, and we hope that additional donor funds will be secured in order to implement the still outstanding components.

The European Union values Montenegro's constructive and active approach towards regional co-operation and stability in the Western Balkans. We recognize the important role the Mission plays in assisting Montenegro to consolidate key reforms as well as in strengthening cooperation among the field missions and other international actors in the region. We commend the Mission's efforts to focus on main priorities as well as on results and follow-up, and we encourage further efficient use of resources also on the basis of effective evaluation. In this regard we invite Ambassador Hřebíčková to highlight some concrete examples of the key impacts of the Mission in this reporting period.

We appreciate the host country's readiness to join the efforts on the implementation of priorities and commitments across all three dimensions and wish the Mission further success in its future work based on this fruitful cooperation.

Finally, we thank you, Ambassador, for your presentation and assure you and your team of our continued support.

The Candidate Countries the FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA\*, MONTENEGRO\*, ICELAND+ and ALBANIA\*, the Country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and Potential Candidate BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA, and the EFTA countries LIECHTENSTEIN and NORWAY, members of the European Economic Area, as well as UKRAINE and the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA align themselves with this statement.

\* The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.

+ Iceland continues to be a member of the EFTA and of the European Economic Area.