



EUROPEAN UNION

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EU Statement on the Report by the OSCE Project Coordinator in Ukraine

The European Union warmly welcomes Ambassador Henrik Villadsen to the Permanent Council. We thank you, Ambassador, for your report and for all the work that your mission has carried out since you last participated in the Permanent Council in December. Your support to the reform process in Ukraine across all three dimensions is of high importance. We regret that attempts at progress are sometimes overshadowed by the ongoing conflict in eastern Ukraine, which is a consequence of acts of aggression by the Russian armed forces. The EU reiterates its firm support for the work of the OSCE Project Co-ordinator in Ukraine.

The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic affected the programme activities across all dimensions. However, the PCU reacted immediately with various mitigation measures and supported the Ukrainian authorities by providing equipment, such as medical masks and telecommunication equipment. We commend you and your team for continuing project implementation despite COVID-19 challenges.

The EU welcomes the launch earlier this month of the three-year Gender Strategy, which represents a good step towards the mainstreaming of a gender perspective in all of PCU's programmes and activities. Your training of the staff of the State Bureau of Investigation on gender aspects in criminal proceedings, as well as your support for the "End the Silence" campaign with the distribution of 2,000 posters, are highly appreciated. We also welcome your induction training on gender equality in the justice sector, which will provide legal professionals with a tool to apply a gender-sensitive approach to their work.

We support PCU's continued engagement in the field of democratization and good governance. It is encouraging to hear about your work in promoting dialogue and bridge-building between the Ukrainian government, civil society and local communities, as participatory decision-making is one of the fundamental pillars of an open and democratic state. Given that Ukraine's local elections are scheduled for October this year, we appreciate the PCU's assistance in upgrading the CEC conference system and regular updates of the "Local Elections" website, as this contributes to efforts to strengthening transparency and encouraging voter participation.

The EU is pleased to hear about the ways that you support constitutional and judicial reforms and how you conduct training on rule of law and human rights in Ukraine. We welcome the PCU's work on access to justice issues in conflict-affected areas and, in particular, efforts to protect children's rights in court proceedings.

We remain concerned about the threats from transnational crime and therefore support your recommendations within areas such as developing a legal framework for critical infrastructure protection or capacity building for the law enforcement personnel to investigate cybercrimes involving cryptocurrencies.

The EU welcomes the PCU's actions to combat domestic violence and we commend you and your staff for your very successful assistance in training multi-disciplinary domestic-violence response teams.

The EU remains concerned about the growing threat posed by mines and UXOs in the conflict areas in eastern Ukraine. We appreciate your outreach activities on International Mine Action Day and the signing of the MoU between the PCU and the Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance and Geneva International Center for Humanitarian Demining for collaboration in mine action and in the area of democratic control of armed forces.

The EU also welcomes the PCU's work with the Donbass Environmental Assessment, which included both threat analysis and suggestions of risk mitigation measures in the conflict-affected area.

The EU highly appreciates the PCU'S efforts to support the Ukrainian government in preventing and combating illicit trafficking in weapons, ammunition and explosives and is awaiting the start of three new technical assistance projects very soon.

We encourage the Ukrainian government to fully draw on the PCU's expertise and potential. We underline again the importance of continued close coordination between the PCU, the SMM and the OSCE autonomous institutions, as well as with other international actors to achieve the greatest possible impact on the ground. In this respect, we welcome that the PCU maintains close contacts with the High Commissioner for National Minorities and civil society representatives with particular relevance to linguistic aspects of the Education law.

The EU thanks Ambassador Villadsen once again for his report. We underline that the PCU's continued efforts to ensure coherence between its programme activities and OSCE's principles and commitments are highly appreciated. We wish the Project Coordinator and his team all the best in their future work.

The Candidate Countries REPUBLIC of NORTH MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO* and ALBANIA*, and the EFTA countries ICELAND and LIECHTENSTEIN, members of the European Economic Area, as well as 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.