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**Chairmanship: Sweden****1313th PLENARY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL**

1. Date: Thursday, 13 May 2021 (via video teleconference)

Opened: 10 a.m.  
Suspended: 1 p.m.  
Resumed: 3 p.m.  
Closed: 5.05 p.m.

2. Chairperson: Ambassador U. Funered  
Ambassador T. Lorentzson

Prior to taking up the agenda, the Chairperson welcomed the new Permanent Representative of Greece to the OSCE, H.E. Ambassador Konstantinos Kollias.

3. Subjects discussed – Statements – Decisions/documents adopted:

Agenda item 1: **REPORT BY THE OSCE REPRESENTATIVE ON  
FREEDOM OF THE MEDIA**

Chairperson, OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, Portugal-European Union (with the candidate countries Albania, Montenegro and North Macedonia; and the European Free Trade Association countries Iceland and Liechtenstein, members of the European Economic Area, in alignment) (PC.DEL/732/21), Russian Federation (PC.DEL/697/21), United Kingdom, Turkey (Annex 1), Switzerland (PC.DEL/726/21 OSCE+), United States of America (PC.DEL/694/21), Azerbaijan (PC.DEL/706/21 OSCE+) (PC.DEL/707/21 OSCE+), Turkmenistan, Norway (PC.DEL/699/21), Canada, Georgia (PC.DEL/735/21 OSCE+), Ukraine (PC.DEL/703/21), Armenia (PC.DEL/708/21), Albania (PC.DEL/696/21 OSCE+), Holy See (PC.DEL/695/21 OSCE+), Cyprus (PC.DEL/710/21 OSCE+), Montenegro (PC.DEL/720/21 OSCE+), Kyrgyzstan, Belarus (PC.DEL/701/21 OSCE+), Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan (PC.DEL/718/21 OSCE+), Netherlands (also on behalf of Austria, Canada, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Latvia, Lithuania, Montenegro, Norway, Sweden, the United Kingdom and the United States of America), France (PC.DEL/698/21 OSCE+), Lithuania (Annex 2), Germany (Annex 3)

Agenda item 2: REVIEW OF CURRENT ISSUES

Chairperson

- (a) *Russia's ongoing aggression against Ukraine and illegal occupation of Crimea*: Ukraine (PC.DEL/700/21), Portugal-European Union (with the candidate countries Albania, Montenegro and North Macedonia; the European Free Trade Association countries Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway, members of the European Economic Area; as well as Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine, in alignment) (PC.DEL/733/21), Switzerland (PC.DEL/727/21 OSCE+), Turkey (PC.DEL/721/21 OSCE+), Canada, United Kingdom, United States of America (PC.DEL/702/21)
- (b) *Deteriorating situation in Ukraine and continued non-implementation by the Ukrainian authorities of the Minsk agreements*: Russian Federation (PC.DEL/711/21), Ukraine, Portugal-European Union
- (c) *Incursion by Azerbaijan into the sovereign territory of Armenia*: Armenia (Annex 4), Azerbaijan (Annex 5)
- (d) *Europe Day, observed on 9 May 2021*: Portugal-European Union (with the candidate countries Albania, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia; the country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate country Bosnia and Herzegovina; as well as Andorra, Georgia, Moldova, San Marino and Ukraine, in alignment) (PC.DEL/725/21), Switzerland (also on behalf of Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway) (PC.DEL/728/21 OSCE+), United States of America (PC.DEL/705/21), Turkey (Annex 6)
- (e) *Violations of human rights in the United Kingdom*: Russian Federation (PC.DEL/719/21), United Kingdom

Agenda item 3: REPORT ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE  
CHAIRPERSON-IN-OFFICE

- (a) *Joint statement by the Chairperson-in-Office, the Secretary General and the Director of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights in commemoration of the 10th anniversary of the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence, delivered on 11 May 2021*: Chairperson
- (b) *Conflict cycle seminar "Ten years after Vilnius – Advancing an inclusive 'whole-of-OSCE' approach to prevent violent conflict and build sustainable peace", to be held via video teleconference from 17 to 19 May 2021*: Chairperson
- (c) *Update on the COVID-19 situation with respect to the conduct of OSCE meetings in Vienna*: Chairperson

Agenda item 4: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY GENERAL

- (a) *Announcement of the distribution of the Secretary General's weekly report (SEC.GAL/65/21/Corr.1 OSCE+): Secretary General*
- (b) *Update on the COVID-19 situation across the OSCE executive structures and on the vaccination campaign for all staff of the Vienna-based international organizations: Secretary General (SEC.GAL/65/21/Corr.1 OSCE+)*
- (c) *Meeting of the Secretary General with the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Tajikistan, H.E. Mr. S. Muhridin, held via video teleconference on 7 May 2021: Secretary General (SEC.GAL/65/21/Corr.1 OSCE+)*
- (d) *Meeting of the Secretary General with the Head of the OSCE Mission to Moldova, held on 11 May 2021: Secretary General (SEC.GAL/65/21/Corr.1 OSCE+)*
- (e) *E-learning course on OSCE cyber/ICT security confidence-building measures: Secretary General*

Agenda item 5: ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- (a) *OSCE Regional Conference on Countering Terrorist Financing and Transnational Organized Crime, co-organized by the OSCE Transnational Threats Department and held via video teleconference on 11 May 2021: Turkmenistan, Russian Federation*
- (b) *Pardoning of 1,035 prisoners in Turkmenistan on the occasion of Qadr Night, sacred to the Islamic world: Turkmenistan*
- (c) *Parliamentary elections in Norway, to be held on 13 September 2021: Norway*
- (d) *Early parliamentary elections in Armenia, to be held on 20 June 2021: Armenia*
- (e) *Early parliamentary elections in Moldova, to be held on 11 July 2021: Moldova*
- (f) *Post COVID-19 recovery in the light of the European Union's Porto declaration: Portugal-European Union (with the candidate countries Albania, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia; the country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate country Bosnia and Herzegovina; as well as Andorra, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine, in alignment) (PC.DEL/734/21), Russian Federation (PC.DEL/712/21 OSCE+), United States of America (PC.DEL/709/21), United Kingdom (also on behalf of Canada)*

4. Next meeting:

Thursday, 20 May 2021, at 10 a.m., in the Neuer Saal and via video teleconference



**Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe  
Permanent Council**

PC.JOUR/1313

13 May 2021

Annex 1

Original: ENGLISH

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**1313th Plenary Meeting**

PC Journal No. 1313, Agenda item 1

**STATEMENT BY  
THE DELEGATION OF TURKEY**

Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

I join the previous speakers in warmly welcoming the Representative on Freedom of the Media, Madam Teresa Ribeiro, to the Permanent Council. We thank you, Madam Ribeiro, for your report on the activities of the Representative on Freedom of the Media in the past six months.

We attach high value to the Representative on Freedom of the Media. It is an institution that belongs to all of us. The participating States have given the Representative on Freedom of the Media a robust mandate with the objective of strengthening the implementation of relevant OSCE principles and commitments. The position of the Representative is one of the most visible in our organization and its holder is one of the most important international actors in the area of media freedom. Therefore, we wish to see that the Representative's work makes a true difference throughout the entire OSCE region.

Madam Chairperson,  
Madam Representative,

My delegation has carefully scrutinized your report, as our authorities are now doing. Allow me to share some of our observations. Your words are direct. The problems are named openly. The assessments pertain to the manifold challenges faced by all the participating States. I found the analytical approach of the report especially thought-provoking, as you and your able team pinpoint developments in individual areas and countries but at the same time place them in a broader context. As such, the conclusions reached in this way appear much more striking.

In addition to the important areas of activity sketched in your report, we would welcome sustained attention to the challenge of rising intolerance and discrimination in line with the mandate.

In your report you describe how you see your role, namely, "to paint a picture based on individual cases and on some of the trends [you] witness in parts of, or across, the OSCE region." At the same time, you highlight the importance of co-operation, dialogue and

diplomacy. You indicate that on some issues you will follow “a more strategic and long-term approach”. I personally found your reference to the spirit of Helsinki inspiring.

On the basis of our general observation of your office’s work and of the numerous bilateral encounters we have had in the past months – some of which you have mentioned in your report – we can say that your activities have indeed been very much in line with how you perceive your role as Representative on Freedom of the Media.

For our part, over the years we have been maintaining a constructive dialogue and co-operation with the Representative on Freedom of the Media and the office. We value and appreciate your work. We believe that direct channels and encounters are important. Our aim is to further our relations. We have taken note of the concerns and issues raised in your report that relate to Turkey. We are seeking to inform your office on developments in Turkey on a regular basis. Our authorities are working on a comprehensive response in connection with the interventions you have made in the past weeks.

In your written report you have mentioned the killing of the radio journalist Hazım Özsü. Let me emphasize once again: attacks against journalists are unacceptable. All attacks are condemned. After the murder, the authorities immediately launched an investigation. The suspect was identified and arrested a few days later. The public prosecutor rapidly completed the indictment and brought the case to court. A date for the first proceedings will be determined in due course.

Madam Chairperson,  
Madam Representative,

Turkey has a very vibrant, dynamic and pluralistic society. This is also reflected in the media landscape, with numerous media outlets addressing different segments of the society and using traditional or innovative means.

Freedom of expression and of the media constitutes an important pillar of human rights policies for Turkey. It is a fundamental freedom guaranteed under the Constitution and relevant legislation.

The Judicial Reform Strategy, which serves as a roadmap for the works carried out in the field of justice, was published in 2019. In March 2021, the Human Rights Action Plan was announced. The Action Plan was prepared with the broad participation of all stakeholders including NGOs. The establishment of a strong, accessible and effective human rights protection system is laid down as a primary goal. The Action Plan includes a comprehensive set of activities to raise the standards of freedom of expression and press freedom. In this context, reviewing the relevant legislation in light of the human rights standards, facilitating the professional activities of journalists and ensuring the safety of journalists as an overarching principle are specified among the planned activities.

Globally mounting security threats, terrorism in particular, pose new challenges for our societies with regard to freedom of expression. Today, many democracies face similar problems.

In this context, our priority is to strike a proper balance between maintaining public order and security and ensuring protection of freedom of expression and freedom of the media.

Following the entry into force of the first legislative amendment package pursuant to the Judicial Reform Strategy, several decisions of release were issued by relevant courts. Our high courts continue to make important decisions protecting fundamental rights, including freedom of expression, in line with the case law of the European Court of Human Rights.

On the other hand, journalism cannot be used as a shield against criminal investigations. In fact, using any profession in the service of committing crimes goes against the principles of journalism as well.

The individual cases referred to by certain colleagues are being examined by independent and impartial courts. It is important to refrain from commenting on ongoing judicial processes which amounts to undue interference with the functioning of the independent judiciary.

In closing, I should once again like to thank you, Madam Ribeiro, and your team. We wish you every success in your ongoing and future activities.

Madam Chairperson, I kindly request that this statement be attached to the journal of the day.

Thank you.



**1313th Plenary Meeting**  
PC Journal No. 1313, Agenda item 1

**STATEMENT BY  
THE DELEGATION OF LITHUANIA**

Madam Chairperson,

We warmly welcome the Representative on Freedom of the Media, Ms. Teresa Ribeiro, to the Permanent Council and thank her for her first report. Lithuania aligns itself fully with the statement of the European Union. However, since my country was mentioned by the distinguished representative of the Russian Federation, I would like to exercise the right of reply in my national capacity.

It was only two weeks ago, on 29 April, that we explained in detail why the Lithuanian Radio and TV Committee had taken the decision to stop transmitting five programmes broadcast by Russia Today. In his statement, the distinguished representative of the Russian Federation has again provided groundless accusations that Lithuania somehow violated its obligations to ensure free access to information. All national minorities in Lithuania have a wide variety of media available in their language. For example, Lithuanian Radio and Television is producing and transmitting around 150 programmes dedicated to national minorities, including those speaking Russian. Many newspapers and magazines are published in Russian and much more information is available on the Internet.

In her report, the Representative on Freedom of the Media raised many concerns regarding freedom of expression and freedom of the media in Russia. Among other issues, she mentioned harassment of and violence against media actors reporting on public gatherings; the use of legal means to obstruct or stop media; labelling media as “foreign agents”; prohibitive monetary penalties for disobedience; and restrictive requirements and even bans on distributing information.

The European Union regularly expresses its concern over the deliberate abuse of journalists in the Russian Federation, lately of journalists covering public gatherings in support of Alexei Navalny.

We also share the Representative’s concern regarding the spread of disinformation and propaganda. This causes public harm to media freedom by undermining public trust in the media, by breaking professional standards and by undermining the right of the individual to seek, receive and report information.

Madam Chairperson,

Let me reassure you that Lithuania greatly values freedom of expression and also free, independent and diverse media, which are both essential pillars of democracy. Striving for freedom of opinion and expression, both online and offline, for the better protection of journalists and media actors, and for the effective countering of disinformation have all been longstanding priorities for Lithuania in supporting the international human rights agenda.

Madam Chairperson, I kindly ask you to attach this statement to the journal of the day.

I thank you.





**Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe**  
Permanent Council

PC.JOUR/1313

13 May 2021

Annex 3

ENGLISH

Original: GERMAN

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**1313th Plenary Meeting**

PC Journal No. 1313, Agenda item 1

**STATEMENT BY  
THE DELEGATION OF GERMANY**

Madam Chairperson,

Since the Russian Ambassador mentioned Germany in his statement, I should like to briefly exercise my right of reply.

The so-called financial harassment cited in the statement by the Russian Federation in connection with Germany seems to be an allusion to the closure of the accounts of Russia Today Deutschland and Ruptly by Commerzbank. In this regard I refer to the clarifications made by Ambassador Bräutigam at the Permanent Council meeting of 29 April 2021.

The closure of these accounts is a purely private-sector matter. The Federal Government has no influence on this matter whatsoever.

Press freedom is a cornerstone of our democracy in Germany. It is enshrined in the German Constitution and is also guaranteed for foreign media.

Thank you.

I request that this statement be attached to the journal of the day.



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**1313th Plenary Meeting**

PC Journal No. 1313, Agenda item 2(c)

**STATEMENT BY  
THE DELEGATION OF ARMENIA**

Madam Chairperson,

I would like to inform the Permanent Council about the provocative and extremely dangerous actions undertaken yesterday by the Azerbaijani armed forces in the direction of the southern Armenian province of Syunik.

Early in the morning of 12 May, the armed forces of Azerbaijan in small groups violated the State border of the Republic of Armenia in the Syunik province, in the areas of Lake Sevlich (Black Lake), which is one of the major water reservoirs of the province, and the Mets Ishkhanasar and Tsg huk mountains. The armed forces advanced 3.5 kilometres into the sovereign territory of Armenia and attempted to besiege the lake and gain a foothold in this area. Later on, more Azerbaijani troops advanced into the territory of Armenia and concentrated at Lake Sevlich and in other neighbouring areas. It is estimated that there were about 150 military personnel in the area of Lake Sevlich and about 250 troops in the area of Mount Ishkhanasar.

The Armenian armed forces are concentrated on the opposite side.

Armenia strongly condemns these actions of Azerbaijan, which constitute an encroachment on the sovereign territory of the Republic of Armenia and are intended to advance the goals of creating new hotbeds of tension along the Armenian State border and exerting psychological pressure on the Armenian civilian population living in the border area.

The Armenian Government is trying to resolve this situation through negotiations to avoid further escalation and casualties, and we count on the support of our partners in our efforts to settle the issue through diplomatic means. While saying this, I wish to emphasize that Armenia will not tolerate such provocative actions against its sovereign territory.

Madam Chairperson,

Delegations may recall that following the 44-day war of aggression unleashed by Azerbaijan with the active support and participation of Turkey and Turkish-backed foreign terrorist fighters and jihadist groups, the Syunik province of Armenia has become the object of persistent threats and territorial claims by the President of Azerbaijan. He stated that

Azerbaijan would use force against the Syunik province of Armenia, which he referred to as “historical lands of Azerbaijan”. Given that when speaking about the history of Azerbaijan President Aliyev refers to the period from the late nineteenth to the early twentieth century, the credibility of such claims may easily be judged.

It should also be noted that shortly before the incursion, President Aliyev repeated his bellicose and provocative statements in an interview, in which he again called the Syunik province of Armenia a “historical Azerbaijani territory” and referred to an imaginary corridor, deliberately undermining the implementation of the 9 November and 11 January trilateral statements.

To clarify this point to delegations, I would like to stress that neither the trilateral statement of 9 November 2020 nor that of 11 January 2021 refers to any corridor. Therefore, we consider this and other similar provocations of Azerbaijan to be well-prepared and disguised territorial claims against the Republic of Armenia.

In his interview, the President of Azerbaijan also made derogatory references to the statements of several OSCE participating States, which he slammed for the responsible positions they adopted. Such provocative actions and behaviour by a participating State are a clear early warning signal to the OSCE and should be properly assessed and condemned, at least by the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chair countries. We particularly deplore the fact that such provocative actions of Azerbaijan have taken place after the recent attempts of our partners to stabilize the situation on the ground.

We call on Azerbaijan to immediately withdraw its armed forces from the sovereign territory of Armenia and to stop fuelling tension, which could lead to a further escalation of the situation on the ground.

Distinguished colleagues,

Against the backdrop of this latest provocation and the constant threats voiced by the President of Azerbaijan, the Azerbaijani Ministry of Defence, without prior notification and in violation of the provisions of the Vienna Document 2011, has announced another large-scale military exercise from 16 to 20 May, with focus on command and control of troops, bringing them to a state of combat readiness and regrouping, taking into account the combat experience gained during the Second Karabakh War. This will be the fourth unnotified military exercise in our region since the end of the war unleashed by Azerbaijan against Armenia and Artsakh. According to a press release of the Ministry of Defence of Azerbaijan dated 12 May, the exercise will involve up to 15,000 military personnel, up to 300 tanks and other armoured vehicles, up to 400 missile and artillery systems of various calibres, multiple-launch rocket systems, mortars, anti-tank weapons, up to 50 units of military aviation, and unmanned aerial vehicles for various purposes.

Unnotified military exercises conducted by Azerbaijan in recent years have twice resulted in the use of force against Artsakh, in 2016 and 2020. We view the announcement of such military exercises immediately after the incursion into the sovereign territory of the Republic of Armenia as a real threat to Armenia and Artsakh, with a potential of further escalation threatening the fragile truce in the region.

Madam Chairperson,

Threats against the territorial integrity of the Republic of Armenia and provocative actions by Azerbaijan are a direct consequence of the muted and inadequate response of the international community to the war of aggression unleashed by Azerbaijan on 27 September 2020 against Artsakh and its people.

Such grave violations of international law by Azerbaijan constitute a serious threat to regional peace and stability. Moreover, this situation has the potential to spin out of control very quickly and to create new tensions not only in the South Caucasus but also beyond its borders.

Therefore, we call on the OSCE participating States to respond appropriately to such provocative and belligerent actions on the part of Azerbaijan, in order to avoid further escalation and the creation of new points of tension. The speedy withdrawal, within a reasonable time frame, of Azerbaijani troops from the territory of Armenia might de-escalate the tense situation on the ground, but if this does not take place, Azerbaijan will bear full responsibility for the consequences of its incursion.

Madam Chairperson,

I kindly ask you to attach this statement to the journal of today's meeting.

Thank you.



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**1313th Plenary Meeting**

PC Journal No. 1313, Agenda item 2(c)

**STATEMENT BY  
THE DELEGATION OF AZERBAIJAN**

Madam Chairperson,

The delegation of Azerbaijan took note of the change in the title of the current issue raised by the delegation of Armenia, as well as the statement delivered under it today.

I would leave aside the usual provocations and unfounded allegations voiced by Armenia against Azerbaijan. As we have witnessed over the last months this practice does not produce any positive tangible outcomes. I encourage the Armenian delegation to engage in a constructive dialogue instead of promoting its narrow political objectives. Thus, I will respond only to the part of the statement of Armenia related to the so-called “incursion” of Azerbaijani troops.

In this regard, I wish to highlight that what the Armenian delegation refers to as “incursion” is in fact an ongoing process of demarcation of the Azerbaijan-Armenia State border. This process has been taking place in accordance with the trilateral statement of 10 November 2020 since the signing of the statement. It is taking place in a peaceful manner and I cannot understand all the fuss created by Armenia out of this issue. Azerbaijani armed forces are taking their legitimate positions in the de-occupied Kelbajar, Lachin and Zangilan districts of Azerbaijan, which are located along the State border between Azerbaijan and Armenia. Pre-conflict maps of these regions show that the positions taken by Azerbaijan are located on the Azerbaijani side of the border.

What is happening is part of military-to-military contacts which unavoidably have to take place between two neighbouring countries in the post-conflict period. This is a normal process, as Azerbaijan and Armenia have to define their State border. This should happen without emotions and in a more businesslike atmosphere. Our military are at these positions not in order to cause any provocations or pose any threats. The demarcation of the State border could help the process of the normalization of relations between Azerbaijan and Armenia. This is why we also called upon and invited the OSCE to contribute to the process of establishing normal relations between Armenia and Azerbaijan, part of which is related to border issues. This is a constructive attitude taken by Azerbaijan and we reject the insinuations by Armenia in this regard. I understand that it is the pre-election period in Armenia at the moment and there are contradictory political assessments of the incident in the country. I encourage the Permanent Representative of Armenia to look into this matter in a

constructive and unemotional manner, and suggest him to utilize the platform of the OSCE for more constructive engagement rather than for pursuing a narrow political agenda.

As to the military exercises held by Azerbaijan, this issue will be addressed by our delegation within the Forum for Security Co-operation in due course.

I request that this statement be attached to the journal of the day.

Thank you, Madam Chairperson.



**Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe  
Permanent Council**

PC.JOUR/1313

13 May 2021

Annex 6

Original: ENGLISH

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**1313th Plenary Meeting**

PC Journal No. 1313, Agenda item 2(d)

**STATEMENT BY  
THE DELEGATION OF TURKEY**

Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

The date of the Schuman Declaration, which laid the foundations of European integration, has been also celebrated as Europe Day in our country since the approval of Turkey's candidacy for European Union (EU) membership in 1999.

It is a day for reflection on the achievements, the present and the future of the European project.

Turkey keeps its determined stance and efforts towards its strategic goal of European Union membership. Regrettably, Turkey has faced and is still facing double standards and obstacles in this regard. Turkey's membership will pave the way for the rise of a Europe that is more effective at regional and global levels and a Europe that gives hope not only to its citizens but also to the people of its neighbourhood.

Madam Chairperson,

The European Union has made significant contributions to the establishment of peace, stability and prosperity in our continent and beyond. Recently, however, the European Union has been facing numerous challenges. We see developments and measures that threaten the universal values the European Union is built upon.

The rise of xenophobia and racism is alarming and threatens human rights and fundamental freedoms. Legislative measures undertaken with good intentions should not end up infringing freedom of religion or belief. Lately, a bill adopted in an EU Member State regulating the "appearance of female and male civil servants" is a source of concern.

Furthermore, the systematic push-back of refugees by some EU Member States clearly violates international humanitarian and refugee laws. Responses to irregular migration can never justify the use of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

Overcoming the problems that threaten the European Union and its future is dependent on solidarity, co-operation and regaining a brave and inclusive perspective. Turkey is ready to do its part.

We hope that the EU will regain its strategic vision and inclusive discourse. We wish that the European Union will sincerely focus on developing its relations with Turkey based on mutual respect and trust with a strategic point of view and common sense.

In concluding, I congratulate all Europeans on the occasion of Europe Day.

I kindly request that this statement be attached to the journal of the day.

Thank you, Madam Chairperson.