



EUROPEAN UNION

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EU Statement in Response to the Chairpersons of the Three Committees

The European Union and its Member States thank the Chairs of the three committees for their presentations.

We wish to express our appreciation for the able Chairmanship by Ambassador Istrate of the **Security Committee**. The OSCE area was shaken by numerous terrorist attacks this year, most recently last Saturday in Ankara. Our substantive priority thus remains the implementation of the OSCE's transnational threats related decision. We welcome the priority given to counter-terrorism in follow-up to the Basel Ministerial, in particular on foreign terrorist fighters and kidnapping for ransom, including through voluntary reporting. We hope that the important work done on countering Violent Extremism and Radicalization that Lead to Terrorism will result in a good text for adoption by Ministers in Belgrade. We recall the continued need to ensure a cross-dimensional approach to combatting transnational threats and we continue to see merit in the continuation of cooperation with other international stakeholders, in particular UNODC.

We welcome the Security Committee's discussion on issues arising and activities undertaken across the OSCE area, thus comparing best practice, for instance on border management. We need to continue to give special attention and support to the cyber Informal Working Group, which is meeting again this week. Let me echo Ambassador Istrate in underlining that we should continue to implement the first set of cyber CBMs while working on a second set, which we hope, could be adopted during the Serbian Chairmanship.

We congratulate Ambassador Papadakis on his new position as **Chair of the Economic and Environmental committee**. The discussions in the committee this year covered a broad range of issues. We thank the Chair for continuing the good

practice of inviting representatives of field operations to committee meetings to present their activities in the second dimension.

We look forward to the upcoming Economic Environmental Implementation meeting next week. It will provide a good opportunity to take stock of the progress made by participating States in the implementation of the OSCE commitments in good governance and combatting corruption, in particular the Basel Ministerial Council decision 5/14 on the prevention of corruption. We also welcome the successful conclusion of this year's Economic Environmental Forum on "Water governance in the OSCE area – increasing security and stability through cooperation." We look forward to receiving the first draft of the ministerial council decision on this issue.

The European Union wishes to express its gratitude to Ambassador Kvile and his team for his dedicated stewardship of the **Human Dimension Committee** over the last two years. The topics addressed in the committee in 2015 have again covered a broad range of human rights issues, and provided space for further discussing pressing issues of concern. In light of developments in the region, we are pleased that some of the most pressing issues, namely freedom of expression and freedom of association and peaceful assembly and torture, including enforced disappearances, have remained high on the Committee's agenda so far this year and we hope to see the adoption of good decisions on these issues at the Belgrade Ministerial.

We thank Ambassador Kvile for the ideas he has shared regarding strengthening the work of the human dimension committee. The practice of a standing agenda and voluntary reporting are two important initiatives that have continued during his tenure, and we hope to see maintained. At the same time, we agree that these offer a solid foundation that can be built upon. In particular, we believe that there is greater scope to use the committee in following up on human dimension discussions in the Permanent Council and at annual human dimension events such as the Human Dimension Implementation Meeting, including through voluntary reporting. We would also welcome steps to engage OSCE autonomous Institutions and civil society further in such discussions. This we believe would contribute to a more informed and interactive dialogue. We would be happy to discuss this further and we stand ready to work closely with the incoming Chairmanship and the future Chairperson of the Committee on any initiatives they may bring forward.

Mr. Chair, we appreciate the continued thematic approach to the discussions in the three Committees and the Joint Committee Meeting such as the recent one on Migration. We welcome the active participation of the autonomous OSCE institutions, OSCE field operations and, not least, civil society including NGOs in committee meetings. Their participation has enriched the discussions in the Committees.

Finally, allow me to express the full support of the European Union and its Member States to the important work of Ambassadors Istrate, Papadakis and Kvile. We wish them every success in their future endeavours.

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 country LIECHTENSTEIN, member of the European Economic Area, as well as UKRAINE, the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA, GEORGIA, ANDORRA and SAN MARINO 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.