



## EUROPEAN UNION

### **OSCE Permanent Council 1396 Vienna, 27 October 2022**

#### **EU Statement in response to the Address by the President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, Ms Margareta Cederfelt**

1. The European Union warmly welcomes back to the Permanent Council Ms Margareta Cederfelt, President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly. We take the opportunity to congratulate you on your re-election at the Birmingham Annual Session in July.
2. The established practice of inviting the President of the OSCE PA to address the Permanent Council contributes to reinforcing the complementarity of our respective efforts. We follow and pay close attention to the many activities of the parliamentary dimension of our Organization.
3. When you last spoke before this Council in the afternoon of 24 February, you rightly condemned in the strongest terms Russia's armed aggression against Ukraine as a clear and gross violation of the most basic norms of international law as well as OSCE principles and commitments. European security has been shaken to its foundations by this war of aggression waged against Ukraine by Russia, further enabled and actively supported by Belarus. We appreciate the strong stance that you, through your leadership of the Parliamentary Assembly, have taken on this.
4. We welcome the Birmingham Declaration which condemns in the strongest terms Russia's military aggression against Ukraine and we welcome the PA's wider efforts and engagement with regard to Ukraine, such as the Migration Committee focusing on Ukrainian refugees in Europe, your meeting in Stockholm with Ukrainian Foreign Minister Kuleba, the appointment of a Special Representative for parliamentary dialogue on Ukraine and the visit of a PA delegation under your leadership to Ukraine

in June, as well as your most recent participation at the International Crimea Platform Parliamentary Summit in Zagreb.

5. We agree with you that as Russia multiplies its illegal actions we must remain united and determined in our support to Ukraine and in ensuring accountability. In doing this we stand up, as you pointed out, for the principles and commitments of the Helsinki Final Act and we defend the work of the OSCE. The reports under the Moscow Mechanism and the work of ODIHR to document the violations of human rights and international humanitarian law in the context of Russia's armed aggression in Ukraine as well as human rights violations within the Russian Federation are important contributions to the international efforts to ensure accountability. It is important to jointly pursue the widest possible dissemination of the results of such work.
6. Beyond Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, the guns unfortunately have not remained silent. There are still unresolved conflicts in the OSCE region and lately we have seen examples of hostilities resumed between neighbours. We agree with you that the OSCE has the right formats and instruments in place to work for sustainable conflict solutions, which should be used more often and more actively.
7. We could not agree more when you stress that we must continue to defend human rights and fundamental freedoms and to promote inclusive societies. The recent Warsaw Human Dimension Conference was an opportunity to hear the courageous and determined testimonies from civil society of human rights abuses, the increasing targeting of human rights defenders and the slow progress and, in some cases backward steps in our efforts to achieve gender equality and the full respect for women's rights. We appreciate your participation and valuable contribution at the Warsaw Human Dimension Conference.
8. After the fraudulent presidential elections in Belarus just over two years ago, the Lukashenka regime has orchestrated a brutal repression. Together with like-minded partners, the EU has been vocal and united in calling on the regime to end its repressive practices and to unconditionally release and rehabilitate the more than 1300 political prisoners currently being detained. We welcome the timely appointment

of a PA Special Representative on Political Prisoners as it will help to maintain the spotlight on their plight.

9. We welcome the continued efforts by the Parliamentary Assembly to participate in election observation activities. Election observation is a valuable tool for the promotion of democratisation and respect for human rights across the region. We reaffirm our full support for the ODIHR election observation methodology and welcome the independent, impartial and professional manner in which it is implemented by the Parliamentary Assembly in partnership with ODIHR.
10. Lasting security cannot be sustained without respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, democracy, and the rule of law. In this respect, the OSCE autonomous institutions – ODIHR, RFoM, and HCNM, alongside the Parliamentary Assembly - have a key role to play. We equally applaud the field missions that have continued to deliver and assist the participating States. It is the responsibility of all of us to preserve them and their strong mandates, and ensure their proper functioning.
11. We welcome the role of parliamentarians from EU Member States in the activities of the Parliamentary Assembly and we appreciate that some have been appointed by you as Special Representatives or as Chairs of Ad Hoc Committees.
12. We have continued to follow with attention the events held in the framework of the “Call for Action/Helsinki +50” initiative, under Ambassador Zannier’s leadership, on enhancing the effectiveness of the OSCE.
13. Parliamentarians also contribute to the work of the OSCE by advocating for the Organisation in capitals and with international partners. In the current circumstances as our security is threatened by Russia’s unjustified and unprovoked war of aggression against Ukraine, we more than ever need the principled and effective OSCE, which plays an essential role for the collective security of the region.
14. In concluding, we wish all the best for the Autumn Meeting in Warsaw next month.

The Candidate Countries REPUBLIC of NORTH MACEDONIA\*, MONTENEGRO\*, ALBANIA\*, UKRAINE and REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA, the Potential Candidate Country

BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA\*, the EFTA country LIECHTENSTEIN, member of the European Economic Area, as well as ANDORRA and SAN MARINO align themselves with this statement.

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