



## **STATEMENT**

**As delivered by Ambassador Ketevan Tsikhelashvili, Permanent Representative of Georgia to the OSCE  
In response to the Report by the Director of ODIHR  
At the 1364th Meeting of the OSCE Permanent Council  
Vienna, 24 March 2022**

Mr. Chair,

*We align with the statement delivered by the delegation of the European Union. In addition, allow me to add the following remarks, in my national capacity.*

I would like to warmly welcome Director Mecacci back to the Permanent Council meeting and thank him for the annual report that reflects the ODIHR's extensive work that we are grateful for. The ODIHR's role and need for engagement is perhaps even more critical now, given Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine that puts democratic values and human rights, thus the very core of our commitments in hazard. Today, more than ever, we need to mobilise efforts to protect them.

Here, once again, I would like to voice Georgia's full support and solidarity to Ukraine. We strongly condemn Russia's unjustified and unprovoked military aggression, in gross violation of international law, including international humanitarian law. As we speak, shockingly, many civilians in Ukraine, in the very heart of Europe, suffer unbearably at the hands of Russian forces and 10 million people are displaced.

As noted in the ODIHR Statement of 22 March, most of them are particularly vulnerable women and children; Protection of their rights, shielding them from trafficking, violence and child abuse is essential. Regrettably, Georgia knows, way too well, the dire humanitarian impact of Russia's aggression. With our bitter experience in mind and in light of our grave concerns regarding the potential for war crimes and crimes against humanity, Georgia was among 45 participating States invoking the Moscow Mechanism. In this regard, we appreciate effective cooperation with your Office and we are looking forward to the report of the experts' mission.

Director Mecacci,

Allow me to briefly touch upon the key areas of cooperation between Georgia and ODIHR. We highly value active collaboration with you across wide range of issues, including election observation, strengthening of Georgia's democratic institutions, enhancing gender equality and the rule of law.

We are particularly grateful to ODIHR for monitoring Georgia's local elections last year and appreciate your personal presence in my country. We look forward to the final report, including recommendations of the Election Observation Mission.

Let me also use the opportunity and express gratitude for providing Georgian monitors with multiple opportunities to observe elections in the participating States as funded observers.

Mr. Chair,

We have been actively engaged with the ODIHR on judiciary reform, including through monitoring of Nomination and Appointment of Supreme Court Judges of Georgia.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate our commitment to continue the effective cooperation with the ODIHR and reaffirm readiness to host you, dear Matteo in Georgia soon, in due course.

Thank you.