



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Permanent Council No 1133 Vienna, 9 February 2017

EU Statement in Response to the Presentations by the Chairs of the Three Committees

The European Union and its Member States thank the Chairs of the three committees for their presentations of the ambitious work programme they have set out for this year.

We welcome Ambassador Kongstad in his new capacity of Chair of the Security Committee. Our priority remains the implementation of the OSCE's Ministerial commitments related to transnational threats, through a comprehensive approach and in close co-operation with other international stakeholders. We support the priorities set out, namely preventing and countering violent extremism and radicalisation that lead to terrorism with a special focus on youth and gender, cyber security, and security sector reform and governance. OSCE-specific tools and expertise to address transnational threats, such as border management and police cooperation, should remain on the agenda. We support an operational focus and the mainstreaming of human rights and gender aspects, as well as the continuation of the valuable established practice of voluntary reporting by participating States. We are convinced that our efforts to prevent and counter transnational threats will only be effective if we uphold human rights and democratic standards.

We welcome the comprehensive agenda for the Economic and Environmental Committee presented by Ambassador Sarybay. The Second Dimension is an integral part of the comprehensive security approach of the OSCE. We look forward to working on key topics in both the economic and environmental spheres, such as renewable energy, good governance including in global supply chains, climate change, combatting corruption, connectivity through transport and

trade facilitation, labour migration and preventing radicalisation through economic participation, among others. We are pleased to see that the agenda will also allow us to build upon the substantial Ministerial Council decision on good governance and connectivity that we agreed upon in Hamburg. We underline the value added of the OSCE field missions, and appreciate getting a clearer picture of concrete OSCE economic and environmental activities on the ground, and on how such activities could best contribute to conflict prevention and confidence building in the OSCE region.

We welcome the planned approach by the Chair of the Human Dimension Committee, Ambassador MacLeod, to the organisation of the work this year. We welcome the broad choice of topics, in particular the focus on the fundamental freedoms of expression, association and assembly, religion or belief, torture prevention and gender and we look forward to interactive and interesting discussions. We welcome the intention to continue to involve a broad range of stakeholders in the work of the Committee and to maintain the standing agenda and the practice of voluntary reporting. We thank those participating States that made efforts and presented such reports and encourage others to make use of this mechanism in 2017. We also believe there is greater scope for using the Committee in following up on human dimension discussions in the Permanent Council and at annual human dimension events, such as the HDIM. The Human Dimension should remain at the forefront of our work. We welcome proposals for joint meetings with the other committees on cross-cutting issues. It is useful that the HDC provides a much needed platform to report on the recommendations of the parallel conference to the Ministerial Council in Hamburg.

The European Union appreciates the continued thematic approach to the discussions in the three Committees. We reiterate our view that we welcome the engagement of OSCE autonomous Institutions, OSCE field operations, the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly and, not least civil society including NGOs further in enriching discussions in the Committees. Also, integrating a gender perspective in the work of all three Committees is an important way to enhance the work of our organisation.

Finally, allow me to express the full support of the European Union and its Member States to the important work that Ambassadors Kongstad, Sarybay and MacLeod will lead within the three dimensions this year. We wish them every success in these endeavours and we stand ready to support and contribute to the work of the three Committees.

The Candidate Countries the FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO*, SERBIA* and ALBANIA*, the Country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and Potential Candidate BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA, and the EFTA countries ICELAND and LIECHTENSTEIN, members 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, Serbia and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.