



## EUROPEAN UNION

### **OSCE Permanent Council No. 1520 Vienna, 15 May 2025**

#### **EU Statement in response to the Report by the Project Co-ordinator in Uzbekistan**

1. The European Union warmly welcomes Ambassador Antti Karttunen to the Permanent Council and thanks him for his comprehensive report.
2. As the OSCE region and beyond continues to grapple with the consequences of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, we commend the Project Co-ordinator in Uzbekistan (PCUz) for its continued efforts in all three dimensions of security, as well as on cross-dimensional topics. We also commend the host country in implementing OSCE principles and commitments in line with Uzbekistan's reform priorities. Moreover, we appreciate Uzbekistan's strengthened engagement with the OSCE, facilitated by the PCUz.
3. We took note of the elections of the Legislative Chamber of Uzbekistan, held on 27 October in accordance with the regular election cycle and observed by many international observers, including from OSCE/ODIHR. We also took note of the ODIHR recommendations and look forward to their implementation by Uzbekistan.
4. We particularly support the continuation of PCUz projects and activities in the following areas: promoting gender equality, media freedom, countering cybercrime - including the misuse of AI for criminal purposes - and enhancing ICT security promoting human rights, supporting a multi-stakeholder approach in preventing and responding to radicalisation, violent extremism and terrorism,

promoting democratic reforms, enhancing the role of youth, promoting anti-money laundering and countering the financing of terrorism, combating corruption, preventing trafficking in human beings, preventing torture, promoting small business development, and increasing employment opportunities.

5. We further appreciate your support for inclusive economic development in Uzbekistan through the promotion of digitalisation and gender equality.
6. We welcome the PCUz's cooperation with the authorities of Uzbekistan in addressing climate and environmental challenges, notably the Samarkand Climate Forum, which followed the EU-Central Asia Summit.
7. We highly value the PCUz's support for Uzbekistan in its ongoing reform process, especially in the area of judicial reform, insofar as it is being undertaken, and capacity-building in the justice sector. Moreover, we express our support for the PCUz's efforts to support Uzbekistan in promoting media freedom and the safety of journalists, and would appreciate more information about its activities and results in this area.
8. We also appreciate the PCUz's work in supporting Uzbekistan's efforts to promote gender equality and strengthen the role of women in society.
9. We regret that the non-adoption of the OSCE's Unified Budget since 2021 has negatively affected the PCUz's capacity to implement its mandate efficiently and to deliver project activities in a timely manner. This has had negative consequences on PCUz's staff and administrative matters, and we call on all participating States to take them into account when negotiating the budget.
10. We underline the importance of the PCUz being present with activities across Uzbekistan and across all three dimensions in a balanced manner, with particular focus on areas where it can deliver the greatest added value, and encourage continued engagement in this respect.
11. The EU continues to support reform efforts in Uzbekistan. We attach great importance to the security, stability and prosperity of Uzbekistan and the wider region. The successful first-ever Central Asia–EU Summit in Samarkand was a valuable opportunity to strengthen the bi-regional partnership. We reaffirm the EU Strategy on Central Asia, which focuses on promoting resilience, prosperity and regional cooperation in Central Asia. The implementation of this strategy

offers a solid foundation for building a strong and durable partnership between the EU and Central Asia. The promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms, the rule of law, civil society, women's rights, sustainable development, and good governance, among others, remain at the core of our relations.

12. In conclusion, the European Union thanks Ambassador Antti Karttunen and his team for their valuable work and wishes them every success.

*Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Norway, Republic of Moldova, Serbia and Ukraine align themselves with this statement.*