



## EUROPEAN UNION

### OSCE Permanent Council N°1083 Vienna, 17 December 2015

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#### EU Statement on work in the OSCE Human Dimension

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We have listened with care to a range of recent interventions on work in the Human Dimension. In the spirit of dialogue and engagement we would also like to respond to recent comments which appear to be resurrecting the idea that raising issues in this dimension somehow constitutes interference in internal affairs; a notion we thought we had left behind. We recall the commitments made by participating States 24 years ago in Moscow and reaffirmed five years ago in Astana by our Heads of State and Government. Those include, not least, that: “The participating States emphasise that issues relating to human rights, fundamental freedoms, democracy and the rule of law are of international concern, as respect for these rights and freedoms constitutes one of the foundations of the international order. They categorically and irrevocably declare that the commitments undertaken in the field of the human dimension of the CSCE are matters of direct and legitimate concern to all participating States and do not belong exclusively to the internal affairs of the State concerned.”

Mr Chairman,

These are basic principles at the core of what we do in the OSCE and the very foundation on which we base our dialogue. We raise issues not for political ends but because they are legitimate concerns. And we welcome concerns raised by others. We believe the OSCE’s autonomous institutions have a unique and central role to play in assisting us in fulfilling our commitments. And part of that role is to remind us when we fall short. Similarly, we welcome the role of civil society organisations who monitor, report and challenge us all to do better. We encourage all participating States to respond to the substance of the issues raised.

The Candidate Countries the FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA\*, MONTENEGRO\* and ALBANIA\*, the Country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and Potential Candidate BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA, and the EFTA countries ICELAND, LIECHTENSTEIN and NORWAY, members of the European Economic Area, as well as UKRAINE, the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA 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.