



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Permanent Council Nr 1056 Vienna, 4 June 2015

EU statement in Response to the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Malta, H.E. Dr. George W. Vella

The EU warmly welcomes Minister Vella to the OSCE Permanent Council. We very much appreciate that the Minister has taken the time to visit us today and share his views on the situation in the OSCE region, including the crisis in and around Ukraine, as well as the situation in the Mediterranean region.

Mr Minister, as you rightly said, the Helsinki Final Act gives a special role to the Mediterranean region. In 1975, participating States were convinced that security in Europe was closely linked with security in the Mediterranean area as a whole. This remains very true until this day. We are closely following the dramatic situation around the Mediterranean and the threats and challenges emerging from this region which have a direct impact on the OSCE region.

These challenges, not least violent extremism and irregular as well as illegal migration, are not just problems for the Mediterranean region itself, or for the European Union, but affect the entire OSCE area. Collective effort is required by all to counter them. We believe that the OSCE can play a role in this regard and most importantly in addressing their root causes - through its work in assisting participating States in the implementation of commitments across the security, economic and environmental, and human dimensions. The OSCE also constitutes a forum for dialogue between participating States and Partners for Co-operation on these and other important questions.

Mr. Minister, you also addressed the very worrisome situation in Libya. The current instability there creates an ideal environment for terrorist organisations and for the criminal activities of traffickers in human beings and smugglers of migrants. We therefore actively support UN-led efforts towards establishing a government of national unity in Libya.

Mr Minister, your visit comes at a critical moment for the OSCE and European security as a whole. European security has been jeopardised over the past year following Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea and Sevastopol and its actions destabilising the situation in Ukraine. The wider implications of Russia's violations of basic OSCE principles represent a significant challenge. What is at stake are the fundamental principles that have provided a solid cornerstone for our area in the last 40 years. This is the larger issue that we need to address in the OSCE.

We thank you for your views and your useful input to our discussions. We wish you all the best for your future endeavours.

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

+ Iceland continues to be a member of the EFTA and of the European Economic Area.