



## **EUROPEAN UNION**

### **OSCE Permanent Council No. 1529**

**Vienna, 24 July 2025**

### **EU Statement in Response to the Report of the Acting Head of the OSCE Programme Office in Dushanbe, Tatiana Turcan**

1. The European Union warmly welcomes Acting Head of Mission, Ms. Tatiana Turcan, to the Permanent Council and thanks her for the comprehensive report. In October last year, the OSCE marked the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its presence in Tajikistan. We place great importance on the continuous work of the OSCE Programme Office in Dushanbe and appreciate its valuable cooperation with the EU Delegation to Tajikistan.
2. We are pleased with the ongoing EU-supported initiative to enhance the operational capacities of Tajik Border Troops in addressing security-related threats. In response to the continuously challenging regional security setting, and at the request and with the approval of the Tajik government, the EU and OSCE launched the third phase of the FPI-funded project “Stabilization of Tajikistan’s Southern Border Region with Afghanistan” in October 2024. The project aims to strengthen the capacities of the Tajik Border Troops to stabilise Tajikistan’s southern border with Afghanistan, providing basic equipment and light infrastructure to ensure a sufficient level of border security.
3. In this context, the EU once again welcomes the signing of the final border agreement on the delimitation and demarcation of the shared border between the Kyrgyz Republic and the Republic of Tajikistan in March this year as an important milestone and a significant step forward, achieved through dialogue and the peaceful resolution of disputes. The agreement will strengthen the resilience and stability of Central Asia.

4. With regard to the parliamentary elections held on 2 March this year, the EU reiterates its regret that – despite a timely invitation – the relevant authorities in Tajikistan failed to accredit OSCE/ODIHR election observers in due time. This lack of accreditation is inconsistent with the principles and commitments agreed upon within the OSCE framework and denied Tajikistan's voters and institutions an impartial and independent assessment of the parliamentary election process. We expect Tajikistan to comply with its OSCE commitments.
5. We appreciate the Office's activities across all three OSCE dimensions and its strong focus on gender equality, as well as the mainstreaming of gender equality and human rights in project activities. In this regard, we support the exchange of good practices through the organisation of study visits involving government officials and representatives from civil society, as well as the OSCE summer media school this year, co-funded by the EU. However, we remain concerned about the human rights situation in Tajikistan and stress the importance of the Office's work in the Human Dimension. Support to reform processes and their effective implementation are crucial for Tajikistan's long-term development.
6. We welcome the Office's support to government and civil society in implementing the State Programme on Human Rights Education and the National Strategy on Human Rights Protection. We reiterate the importance of the Office's work to prevent torture and other forms of ill-treatment and urge Tajikistan to ratify the Protocol to the UN Convention against Torture. In this context, we remain concerned by reports of discrimination and ill-treatment of Central Asian migrant workers in Russia, many of Tajik origin, which have continued throughout this year. Russia must respect their human rights, fundamental freedoms and dignity. We deplore any attempts by Russia to exploit foreign citizens in its war of aggression against Ukraine.
7. We consider the work on freedom of the media and freedom of expression as a priority. We urge the Tajik authorities to fully implement all OSCE commitments on freedom of expression and media freedom, ensuring that dissenting voices can be freely expressed. We are concerned about the lack of progress following the consultative process on the new draft law on mass media. We would welcome the Office's support in encouraging the Tajik authorities to ensure a participatory

process involving media practitioners and Tajik civil society in the formulation of the law and to facilitate its swift adoption.

8. We underline the EU Strategy on Central Asia, which focuses on promoting resilience, prosperity and regional cooperation to forge a strong and durable partnership between the EU and Central Asia. The promotion and protection of the rule of law, human rights and fundamental freedoms for all, without discrimination of any kind, including for women and persons belonging to vulnerable groups, civil society, along with sustainable development and good governance, must remain at the core of these relations, as confirmed by the Joint Statement adopted at the first EU-Central Asia Summit in April in Samarkand. Close cooperation with the OSCE and its field missions, including the Programme Office in Dushanbe, is an important component of this Strategy, and we look forward to further strengthening this collaboration.
9. In conclusion, we wish you, Ms.Turcan, and the dedicated team in Dushanbe every success in your future activities.

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