



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Permanent Council N°1078 Vienna, 19 November 2015

EU Statement in Response to the President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, Mr Ilkka Kanerva

The European Union warmly welcomes the President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly H. E. Ilkka Kanerva to the Permanent Council and thanks him for his presentation.

We once again thank President Kanerva for the contribution of the Parliamentary Assembly to the work of the OSCE. The European Union values the important role of the members of the PA in disseminating and implementing OSCE goals and principles. We appreciate the PA's engagement in promoting our common commitments, notably in the area of democratic elections, human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the protection of human rights defenders and the rule of law. In their role as members of their national Parliaments, members of the PA have a key role in ensuring that OSCE principles are implemented and respected in national legislation. Moreover, with their dialogue across borders, members of the PA can advance confidence-building and conflict resolution in the OSCE area. We also strongly support the OSCE PA's longstanding commitment to the engagement of civil society in OSCE activities.

We appreciate President Kanerva's engagement in the crisis in and around Ukraine, and we note the activities of the Parliamentary Assembly, and frequent discussions related to the crisis. Your recent visit to Ukraine on behalf of the Parliamentary Assembly reaffirmed the pressing need for reaching a sustainable political settlement in line with OSCE commitments, respecting the sovereignty, territorial integrity, unity and independence of Ukraine. We agree with your assessment that there is an urgent need to improve the humanitarian situation in eastern Ukraine, including the situation of internally displaced persons. The European Union welcomes President Kanerva's remarks made during the visit calling on the separatists and those who

influence them to allow unhindered humanitarian access to areas under their control. The EU's position on the crisis including on Russia's violation of OSCE founding principles and commitments is well-known. We reiterate our strong condemnation of the illegal annexation of Crimea and Sevastopol to the Russian Federation and we will not recognise it.

The European Union welcomes the continued co-operation between the PA and ODIHR. We particularly appreciate the contribution of the Parliamentary Assembly to election observation, which we believe strengthens the international election observation efforts and contributes to ensuring that elections comply with OSCE commitments and international standards. We take this opportunity to reiterate our full support for ODIHR's election observation methodology and the independent, professional and impartial manner in which it is implemented by ODIHR in partnership with the Parliamentary Assembly.

Finally, Mr Chair, we welcome the participation of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly in the Helsinki+40 process. We thank the PA for its contribution to the process and encourage them to continue to engage on issues related to security in the OSCE area and to enhance implementation of OSCE principles and commitments.

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 and LIECHTENSTEIN, 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.