



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Permanent Council No. 1466 Vienna, 21 March 2024

EU Statement in response to the report by the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities Ambassador Bakyt Dzhusupov

1. The European Union warmly welcomes the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities, Ambassador Bakyt Dzhusupov, to the Permanent Council, congratulates him on his appointment, and thanks him for his report. We express our support for the important work done by the OCEEA and remain committed to advancing the agenda of the second dimension. We will continue to engage in economic and environmental cooperation as a tool for enhancing security, confidence-building, and conflict prevention in the OSCE region, in line with OSCE values and international commitments. In this regard, we welcome the adoption of the PC decision on the 31st Economic and Environmental Forum (EEF). We regret that some participating States have systematically blocked PC decisions on mandated events. As mandated events should be the rule, not the exception, we would like to remind all participating States of the obligation for all mandated events throughout all three OSCE dimensions to take place. We reiterate our support for the efforts of Malta's Chairpersonship.
2. Over the past couple of years, we have faced exceptional challenges. As the world grapples with the socio-economic repercussions of various crises, including Russia's ongoing war of aggression against Ukraine, we are deeply concerned about the widespread devastation to the environment and economy. Russia's relentless targeting of civilians and critical civilian infrastructure in Ukraine, including agriculture and energy facilities, and port infrastructure,

blatantly violates fundamental provisions of international humanitarian law and international human rights law. Urgent action is needed. The EU and its Member States remain committed to addressing global food security, which is threatened by Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, including through the "Grain from Ukraine" programme and EU-Ukraine "Solidarity Lanes".

3. We welcome all efforts within the OSCE to assist the Ukrainian authorities and citizens to minimise economic and environmental threats to security, in coordination with other international partners. We take positive note of the publication of the report "The Environmental Consequences of the war against Ukraine" by the Conflict and Environment Observatory and by Zoï Environment Network, which was prepared with the support of the OSCE. The report will aid Ukraine's response, recovery planning and legal proceedings for remediation by offering an initial evaluation of the environmental harm and potential risks incurred from February 2022 to February 2023. It addresses several key themes, including the effects of Russia's war of aggression on Ukrainian industrial and energy infrastructure, nuclear facilities, urban and rural environments, freshwater resources, coastal and marine ecosystems, as well as its impact on Ukraine and the world's climate objectives.
4. Ongoing monitoring and frequent reassessments remain imperative. The EU and Member states thus welcome the intention of the OCEEA to continue the project "Assessing the environmental impacts of the war against Ukraine and options for remediation", and complementary efforts and initiatives by the Support Programme for Ukraine. We will continue to support this important work and the implementation of the recommendations.

Ambassador,

5. Climate change continues to prove to be a threat multiplier. Last year's multitude of disastrous extreme weather events once again made that painfully clear. Rising temperatures and sea levels, prolonged droughts, devastating wildfires, climate-induced displacement, and restricted access to already scarce water supplies drive instability and negatively impact prosperity, stability and security in the OSCE region and worldwide. In this context, we applaud the OCEEA's work through the projects on "Strengthening Responses to Security Risks from Climate Change in South-Eastern Europe, Eastern Europe, the South

Caucasus and Central Asia” and on “Managing Climate Change Threats to Critical Energy”. We fully support the importance that you have attached to addressing climate security in accordance with the 2021 Stockholm Ministerial Decision.

6. We further welcome your focus on combating corruption and money laundering, as well as illegal activities with the use of virtual assets and cryptocurrencies, thus supporting the Republic of Moldova, Georgia and Ukraine. We need to act decisively to mitigate security risks related to cyber activities. We also look forward to learning more about your initiatives and activities supporting participating States in the areas of asset recovery and money-laundering.
7. We especially welcome the intention of the Office to continue the implementation of the ExB project “Strengthening Energy Sector Co-operation and Analysis in Central Asia in the Context of Afghanistan’s Energy Crisis” under the RIAOR framework. We particularly appreciate the activities under the project regarding the comprehensive risk assessment of the regional energy security implications of the energy crisis. The EU is convinced that the OSCE and the OCEEA, in cooperation with our Central Asian partners, can make a valuable contribution to the long-term stability and prosperity of the region.
8. We also welcome your new initiative building on the project “Promoting Green Ports and Connectivity”, which addressed the safety and sustainability of supply chains between Central Asia and Europe. Additionally, we applaud your commitment to gender equality and the integration of a gender perspective in key projects addressing connectivity, energy and water sectors. The EU remains fully committed to the economic empowerment of women and youth in societies, and to integrating a gender perspective in all OSCE activities, an essential component of comprehensive security.
9. In conclusion, we would like to reiterate our appreciation for the important work done by the OCEEA, and we wish you success in your important work as the new Co-ordinator of the OCEEA. The EU remains committed to supporting your efforts and, in light of common threats to security, we are more determined than ever to advance the work of the second dimension to achieve comprehensive security. We look forward to continuing our excellent cooperation.

The Candidate Countries NORTH MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO*, ALBANIA*, UKRAINE, the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA, BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA*, and GEORGIA, the EFTA countries ICELAND and LIECHTENSTEIN, members of the European Economic Area, as well as ANDORRA and SAN MARINO align themselves with this statement.

* North Macedonia, Montenegro, Albania, and Bosnia and Herzegovina continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.