



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Permanent Council No. 1506 Vienna, 30 January 2025

EU Statement in Response to the Inaugural Remarks by the OSCE Secretary General

1. The European Union warmly welcomes the newly appointed Secretary General of the OSCE, Feridun H. Sinirlioğlu, to the Permanent Council and thanks him for his inaugural remarks.
2. Mr. Secretary General, you assume this important position at a critical time for European and global security. The challenges to European security, though diverse, primarily stem from the violation of international law and our shared OSCE principles and commitments. By launching and continuing its unprovoked, unjustifiable, and illegal war of aggression against Ukraine, with the complicity of Belarus, Russia has flagrantly violated the core norms, principles, and commitments on which European security is built. These principles, enshrined in the UN Charter and the founding documents of the OSCE, including the Helsinki Final Act and the Charter of Paris, form the bedrock of the European security order. Restoring respect for these principles and upholding them as a shared responsibility must guide our collective efforts. These principles are neither negotiable nor subject to revision or re-interpretation, but they can only be properly safeguarded by ending Russia's war of aggression and restoring Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity.
3. We firmly believe that the OSCE must continue its crucial engagement and assistance in Ukraine, particularly through the Support Programme for Ukraine (SPU) and ODIHR, including by contributing to international accountability efforts in response to Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine. We look forward to the Secretariat's continued contributions in this regard. The EU remains steadfast in its support for Ukraine and its people as they exercise their inherent right to self-defence against Russia's ongoing aggression. We reaffirm our unwavering support for Ukraine's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally

recognised borders. We remain steadfast in helping Ukraine achieve the just and lasting peace it deserves and to supporting its resilience and reconstruction in line with its self-determined European future.

4. We also reiterate our strong call on Russia to immediately and unconditionally release all those arbitrarily and illegally detained, both in Russia and in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine, including the three OSCE officials – Vadym Golda, Maxim Petrov, and Dmytro Shabanov. Mr. Secretary General, we will support all your efforts to secure the freedom of our OSCE colleagues.
5. We share your belief in multilateralism, which, along with a commitment to a rules-based international order, remains a cornerstone of the EU's external policy. We welcome your objective to harness the OSCE's potential to bridge differences through dialogue and cooperation. Achieving this goal will require genuine and honest engagement from all participating States.
6. Conflicts linger unresolved in our region and appropriate attention should be devoted to them. We also appreciate your commitment to contributing to conflict and crisis prevention and resolution, and advancing gender equality. We must maintain momentum in the implementation of the 2004 Gender Action Plan, and look forward to the Secretary General's annual progress report to be presented later this year.
7. Human rights and fundamental freedoms are increasingly challenged across the OSCE region. We support the three autonomous institutions – ODIHR, RFoM and HCNM – in their immense work to uphold our shared commitments and look forward to your effective cooperation with all three.
8. Mr. Secretary General, the EU stands ready to support you, the Finnish Chairpersonship, and the Troika in assisting participating States to implement our shared commitments. We are confident that you will work tirelessly to uphold and promote the values for which the OSCE stands. A demonstrated commitment to transparency, balance, responsiveness, and accountability in your role as OSCE Chief Administrative Officer, alongside a proactive approach to managing the Organisation, will be greatly valued. Sound administrative and financial management of the OSCE is of paramount importance, and we thank you in advance for your efforts in this area.
9. We welcome your readiness to work closely with the Finnish Chairpersonship on the

basis of its priorities, including defending the European security order, supporting Ukraine, promoting comprehensive security across all three dimensions, and enhancing the Organisation's and participating States' resilience. Noting with great concern the Organisation's deteriorating financial situation, we look forward to your active engagement in complementing the Finnish Chairpersonship's efforts to swiftly move towards a unified budget for 2025 that adequately resources the entire Organisation.

10. In conclusion, we reaffirm our readiness to support you in your new role and wish you every success in your work.

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, MONACO 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.