



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Permanent Council No. 1523 Vienna, 5 June 2025

EU Statement in Response to the Inaugural Address by the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities, Amb. Christophe Kamp

1. The European Union warmly welcomes the High Commissioner on National Minorities (HCNM), Ambassador Christophe Kamp, back to the Permanent Council for his first report in this capacity.
2. The EU reiterates its support for the mandate of the autonomous institution HCNM. Providing early warning and seeking early action with regard to tensions involving persons belonging to national minorities is central to the OSCE's concept of comprehensive security.
3. The EU commends the HCNM and his team for their strong focus on the conflict prevention mandate, as illustrated, inter alia, by country visits undertaken during these first five months to the Republic of Moldova, Ukraine, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, and by constructive exchanges with, and offer of support to Serbia, Kosovo¹, Hungary, and North Macedonia.
4. We value the HCNM's support to interethnic cooperation and pragmatic, inclusive and locally grounded dialogue and consultation, as well as the promotion of multi-lingual education.

¹*This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

5. We echo the HCNM's call for the recognition of, and continued support for, positive examples of peaceful coexistence and interethnic cooperation, in the Republic of Moldova, as well as across the OSCE region. We join you in welcoming the Republic of Moldova's adoption of the Concept on Multilingual Education and the inclusive and well-regarded process to develop an Action Plan.
6. We highly value the HCNM's crucial role in protecting our shared principles and commitments, including through clear messages when these are violated. Against the backdrop of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, the active engagement of the HCNM is more important than ever.
7. We emphasise that the presence of persons belonging to Russian speaking or other minorities on the territory of another state must not be exploited as justification for undermining the sovereignty and territorial integrity of that state.
8. We are deeply concerned about reports to HCNM by representatives of minority communities displaced from parts of Ukraine temporarily and illegally occupied by the Russian Federation, highlighting restrictions on education in minority languages, and limitations on both cultural and community life. Russia must comply with its international human rights obligations, including those related to persons belonging to national minorities. We underscore that Russia's actions and measures aimed at forcibly assimilating the local Ukrainian population could seriously undermine any prospects for a just and sustainable peace in the future. The Russian Federation has further violated its obligation under IHL by imposing its legal and administrative systems, including its educational system and curriculum, in the Ukrainian territories it temporarily and illegally occupies. This imposed curriculum fails to comply with IHRL standards, requiring education to be culturally appropriate and to respect the child's own cultural identity, language and values. Particular attention needs to be paid to Ukrainian children, who are also the target of Russian re-education and indoctrination policies, as well as militarisation.
9. In this context, we recall the findings of the OSCE Moscow Mechanism on the Forcible Transfer and/or Deportation of Ukrainian children that "numerous and

overlapping violations of the rights of the children deported to the Russian Federation have taken place”. These include denying “their right to identity”.

10. We appreciate the HCNM’s intention to follow up on these developments in greater depth.
11. The EU firmly believes that the respect, protection and fulfillment of human rights, including those of persons belonging to national minorities, is crucial for maintaining regional peace and stability in the OSCE region. The EU remains committed to ensuring the rights already exercised by persons belonging to national minorities, as enshrined in the applicable UN and Council of Europe Conventions, related protocols, and OSCE commitments on non-discrimination and respect for diversity. In this regard, we commend Ukraine’s efforts to date, and encourage further concrete steps towards protecting the rights of persons belonging to national minorities, maintaining social cohesion and enhancing the inclusiveness of State policy. We also commend HCNM for supporting Ukraine in strengthening institutional resilience and consulting with minority communities on policies that affect them.
12. Recalling the EU Human Rights Guidelines on Non-discrimination in External Action, we reiterate that persons belonging to national minorities should be able to exercise fully and effectively their human rights and fundamental freedoms without discrimination and in full equality before the law. We also reiterate the importance of the effective implementation of legislation on human rights, including those of persons belonging to national minorities, and their non-discriminatory treatment throughout the territory of participating States.
13. The EU attaches great importance to the unhindered work of civil society organisations, which enable persons belonging to national minorities to participate in public life in diverse societies. We echo your call for the engagement of young people belonging to national minorities.
14. We commend the HCNM’s efforts to improve sustainable integration of diverse and multi-ethnic societies, as well as political representation of persons belonging to national minorities. It is vital that the institutions representing

these persons function without undue political interference. We welcome HCNM's work with regard to effective implementation of legal frameworks on the rights of persons belonging to national minorities. This includes the continued engagement in addressing language and education issues, facilitating dialogue, promoting effective participation in public affairs including through consultative mechanisms, safeguarding property rights, ensuring access to media, and upholding the right to practice a religion in the mother tongue of persons belonging to national minorities, where applicable.

15. We reiterate our support for the HCNM's thematic work and encourage all participating States to make use of the HCNM's recommendations and guidelines. We commend your commitment to a gender-sensitive approach in HCNM activities and your resolve to explore further thematic areas to strengthen and inform the work of your office.
16. We appreciate your continued cooperation with other OSCE structures and relevant international and regional institutions, in particular the EU and the UN, and welcome your engagement with the Council of Europe and its Venice Commission.
17. We thank the High Commissioner and his able team for their tireless and much needed work, and wish them every success.

Albania, Andorra, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Republic of Moldova, San Marino and Ukraine align themselves with this statement.