



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Permanent Council No. 1417

Vienna, 30 March 2023

EU Statement in response to the report by the Coordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities Ambassador Igli Hasani

1. The European Union warmly welcomes the Coordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities, Ambassador Igli Hasani, to the Permanent Council and thanks him for his report. Ambassador Hasani, your remarks have effectively highlighted the significance of economic and environmental issues for the stability and security of the OSCE area and its citizens. We remain fully committed to advancing the agenda of the second dimension and engaging in economic and environmental co-operation as a tool for confidence building and conflict prevention, in line with OSCE values and international commitments.
2. It is with great concern that we continue to witness the devastating impact of Russia's unprovoked, unjustified and brutal war of aggression against Ukraine and its people. Russia's war has greatly impacted the environment, ruining farmland, forests and national parks. Industrial facilities have also been damaged, leading to severe air, water and soil pollution, exposing residents to toxic chemicals and contaminated water. We also cannot ignore the environmental damage caused to the wider OSCE region, as a result of Russia's ongoing war, including in the Black Sea. Urgent action is needed.
3. We appreciate your commitment to addressing and alleviating the economic and environmental consequences of Russia's war of aggression, through the implementation of the project "*Assessment of environmental impacts of the war against Ukraine and options for remediation*". The OCEEA can play a vital role

in strengthening Ukraine's disaster risk management, contributing to ensuring food security, and bolstering local capacities in the field of asset recovery. We applaud all efforts to assist the Ukrainian authorities and citizens to minimise economic and environmental threats to security in coordination with other international partners, and we look forward to receiving the one-year assessment report.

4. During a period of unprecedented challenges in the energy sector, we are appalled by Russia's continuing and deliberate attacks on civilian objects such as critical energy infrastructure in Ukraine. Russia's ongoing war of aggression, along with the substantial risks of climate change, pose serious threats to the resilience of our energy systems and now, more than ever, we need to act decisively to guarantee our common security. We applaud the OCEEA's newest initiative "*Protecting critical energy infrastructure from the impact of climate change*" to support the development of a resilient and diversified energy sector in OSCE participating States, including Ukraine, and Partners for Co-operation. The EU is committed to the global green and just energy transition, increasing energy savings and efficiency to reduce the pressure on prices, boosting the development of renewables and hydrogen, and stepping up energy diplomacy.

Ambassador,

5. We fully support the importance that you have attached to addressing climate security in accordance with the Stockholm Ministerial Decision from 2021. The EU is convinced that climate change is one of the most significant global challenges of the 21st century. In this context, we welcome your office's activities in different OSCE sub-regions, including consultations, trainings, and awareness-raising activities on strengthening co-operation to address the security-related challenges caused by climate change, as well as your efforts to promote the effective participation of youth in these activities. In this vein, we welcome the organisation of the High-Level Conference on Climate Change, which will contribute to putting the Ministerial Decision into practice.
6. We further welcome your focus on the fight against corruption and money laundering. In this regard, we are grateful for the OCEEA's new initiative to combat illegal activities with the use of virtual assets and cryptocurrencies. We need to act decisively to mitigate security risks related to cyber activities. We

look forward to learning more about the ad-hoc project that will support the Republic of Moldova, Georgia and Ukraine by providing recommendations for possible legislative amendments and specialised trainings.

7. We appreciate the OCEEA's active involvement in the Secretary-General's initiative for a response to the security challenges resulting from the situation in Afghanistan ("RIAOR"). The EU is convinced that the OSCE and the OCEEA in cooperation with Central Asian participating States can make a valuable contribution to the long-term stability and prosperity of the region.
8. Enhancing connectivity and regional cooperation is a top priority for the EU. We look forward to the results of the OSCE project on "*Promoting Green Ports and Connectivity*", which addresses 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 such as connectivity, energy and water sectors. The EU remains a leading advocate for the economic empowerment of women in all democratic societies, and for integrating a gender perspective in all OSCE activities, an essential component for achieving comprehensive security. The EU will continue to promote gender equality across the OSCE region and to incorporate the gender dimension in our external policies.
9. In conclusion, we thank you and your team for your valuable work. The EU remains committed to supporting your efforts and, in light of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, 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*, SERBIA*, ALBANIA*, UKRAINE, the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA, and BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA*, the Potential Candidate Country GEORGIA, and 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, Serbia, Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.

