



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Permanent Council No. 1425 Vienna, 1 June 2023

EU statement in response to the report by the Director of the Conflict Prevention Centre

1. The European Union would like to welcome Ambassador Tuula Yrjölä to the Permanent Council and thank her for her report on the activities of the Conflict Prevention Centre (CPC).
2. The OSCE is unique in its function as the world's largest regional organisation for security and cooperation. Developments in the OSCE area over the last few years, most importantly the Russian Federation's illegal, unprovoked and unjustifiable war of aggression against Ukraine, which we condemn in the strongest possible terms, have dramatically demonstrated the need for the OSCE to remain actively engaged in the prevention and response to conflicts and crises, according to its primary mandate. The Ministerial Council Decision No. 3/11 on the Conflict Cycle, outlining the OSCE's capabilities in early warning, early action, dialogue facilitation, mediation support, and post-conflict rehabilitation across all three dimensions, along with the instruments in the OSCE conflict prevention and conflict management toolbox, are of key relevance and must be better and more actively used. We recognise and appreciate the important role of the CPC in this context and we emphasise the need for further actions to be taken on the ground.
3. We commend the CPC for its support to the OSCE's engagement in Ukraine. We welcome that the Support Programme for Ukraine, to which the EU and many Member States contribute significantly, provides highly valuable assistance in all three dimensions, enabling the OSCE to continue its long-standing engagement in Ukraine. As Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine has a detrimental impact on our collective security, we continue to urge the CPC and the OSCE participating States to reflect on the lessons learned from the OSCE's action in response to

Russia's war of aggression and explore ways to enhance the organisation's capacity to effectively address emerging pre-conflict situations. In this regard we value the establishment of an ExB-funded OSCE Strategic Asset Reserve, which will maintain a limited pool of operationally critical assets.

4. The EU welcomes the work carried out by the CPC to support field operations. These missions should have strong and flexible mandates, and the necessary financial resources to retain qualified staff, as their work with and across host countries and with civil society on the basis of the comprehensive concept of security is of great importance for addressing tensions through situational awareness, early warning, peace-building, conflict prevention, and mediation. At the same time, and in accordance with its mandate, we would welcome the CPC's active engagement across the OSCE area, regardless of the presence of field operations.
5. The resolution of unresolved conflicts, including those in the Republic of Moldova and in Georgia, with full respect of territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence, remains a priority for the EU. We value the CPC's contribution in this regard, particularly its support to the OSCE Mission to Moldova, the Special Representatives of the Chair and its contribution to the work of the GID.
6. Furthermore, the EU remains actively engaged, including at the highest level, in helping Armenia and Azerbaijan reach long-awaited normalisation and is determined to continue its efforts to achieve sustainable peace and stability in the South Caucasus, also through the EU civilian Mission in Armenia under the CSDP. The EU continues to believe that the OSCE can make a useful contribution in this regard.
7. We reiterate our commitment to the full implementation of existing principles and commitments in the politico-military dimension. Regarding Russia's illegal war of aggression against Ukraine, we continue to deplore the disregard for the provisions of the Vienna Document by both Russia and Belarus. This behaviour undermines the transparency and predictability that these instruments were created to foster. These events have also demonstrated that the organisation and its instruments can only be as effective as the participating States collectively allow them to be.

8. Moreover, we support the activities related to Small Arms and Light Weapons and welcome the completion of the SALW Portal. We thank the CPC for its continued support in this field, as well as for its assistance provided to the Forum for Security Co-operation.
9. The CPC must be provided through the Unified Budget with the resources necessary to carry out its mandate effectively and efficiently, as we have a shared political and financial responsibility for collective security and the OSCE's comprehensive conflict cycle toolbox. In your report you mention that due to the financial situation, you have prioritised certain activities over others, and put some workflows on hold. We would welcome more information related to these actions. Developments in recent years have shown opportunities for the CPC to further enhance the OSCE's abilities and preparedness, particularly in the field of early warning and crisis prevention. Recognising the sensitivity of the issues handled by the CPC, we would welcome greater transparency and increased information-sharing regarding its activities. Specifically, we would be interested in the CPC's role during the recent closures of OSCE missions and the lessons learned that can be applied in any future contingencies— as indicated in your report. Furthermore, we should not lose sight of the fact that one participating State continues to illegally detain three OSCE staff members and has misappropriated OSCE assets.
10. In conclusion, we would like to thank the CPC staff and its Director for their valuable work. We continue to fully support the CPC and wish Ambassador Yrjölä and her dedicated staff every success in their future activities.

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 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.