



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Permanent Council No. 1526 Vienna, 3 July 2025

EU Statement in Response to the Head by the OSCE Mission in Montenegro, Ambassador Jan Haukaas

1. The European Union warmly welcomes Ambassador Jan Haukaas to his first Permanent Council in this role and thanks him for the comprehensive report. Thank you also for the very interesting informal briefing yesterday, which provided valuable insight into some of the Mission's concrete activities.
2. We welcome Montenegro's strategic commitment to our common European values, demonstrated through full alignment with the EU's foreign and security policy (CFSP), including the adoption of EU restrictive measures following Russia's aggression against Ukraine.
3. We take note of Montenegro's progress in the accession negotiations, in which Montenegro started closing negotiating chapters, including Chapter 5 (Public Procurement) at the latest meeting of the Intergovernmental Conference last week. We commend the government's ambitious plan for continuing work towards the closing of the accession negotiations. We encourage all political forces in Montenegro to maintain the focus on reforms to deliver its citizens' expectation of joining the European Union.
4. We welcome the Mission's ongoing dialogue with the government, state institutions, and civil society in support of advancing the broader reform agenda.

5. We commend the Mission's work in three priority areas: Security Cooperation and Governance, Democratisation, and Media and welcome that the Mission's strategic plan for 2025-2027 has been finalised. We would appreciate it if you could elaborate further on how it aligns with Montenegro's national strategic objectives.
6. In particular, we appreciate the Mission's efforts to further integrate gender equality, youth engagement, and environmental protection across its programmes, with a specific focus on the prevention and combating of violence against women and girls.
7. We highly appreciate the Mission's continued support to Montenegrin institutions in strengthening police capacities to address serious and organised crime, transnational threats, trafficking in human beings, and the misuse of small arms and light weapons (SALW). We also commend the Mission's increased focus on enhancing national forensic activities, combating the illicit exploitation of natural resources, and the fight against cybercrime. In particular, we welcome the Mission's contribution to the implementation of the EU-funded OSCE Regional Trial Monitoring Project.
8. We deem crucial the Mission's co-operation with the Parliament and the State Electoral Commission (SEC), especially in fostering gender equality and ensuring greater transparency. In this context, we highlight the importance of the full, equal and meaningful participation of women in political life, and welcome the Mission's continued activities in support of a more inclusive parliament.
9. While we commend the Mission's support to the SEC we see that a number of OSCE/ODIHR recommendations remain unaddressed. We therefore encourage the host country to work closely with the Mission to make progress on the electoral framework, in line with ODIHR's recommendations.
10. In the field of media, we appreciate the Mission's strong focus on the safety of journalists, also by developing a national press safety mechanism. Since attacks on journalists and in particular harassment of women journalists remain a concern,

we strongly support the Mission's cooperation with the Commission for Monitoring Attacks against Journalists and Media.

11. We commend the Mission's substantive achievements, which continue to be highly valued by the host country, despite the difficult financial situation resulting from the absence of an approved OSCE Unified Budget and the need for cost-saving measures.
12. The EU reaffirms its commitment to enlargement, which remains a key policy of the European Union. We reiterate the EU's unequivocal support for the European Union membership perspective of the Western Balkans, based upon credible reforms by partners, fair and rigorous conditionality and the principle of own merits. Montenegro's recent positive results sends a strong political signal that the EU is ready to move forward with candidate countries when they successfully fulfil the required steps. Continued commitment to EU values, including full alignment with EU CFSP, necessary reforms, and fostering good neighbourly relations, are essential in the enlargement process.
13. In conclusion, we would like to thank you, Ambassador Haukaas, for your good start and the work already accomplished, and we wish you and your dedicated team every success.

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