



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Permanent Council N° 1173 Vienna, 25 January 2017

EU Statement in response to the address of the President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly

The European Union warmly welcomes the acting President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, George Tsereteli, to the Permanent Council. Mr. Tsereteli, we wish you all the very best in assuming the responsibilities of chairing the Assembly and look forward to fruitful cooperation. We thank you for presenting the Assembly's work plan for 2018.

We welcome the Parliamentary Assembly's continued support to our shared OSCE principles and commitments and dedication to their implementation and promotion. The regular appearance of the President of the Parliamentary Assembly in the PC, as well as the presence of other PA members in OSCE meetings and events, is a good way of reinforcing dialogue between government representatives and the parliamentary side of this organization. Parliamentarians from different participating States are an invaluable resource for the OSCE in promoting public debate, transmitting our main messages and in acting as a bridge between government representatives and the people.

We have followed with interest the trips you have already undertaken in your new capacity, such as your recent visit to Ukraine. The crisis in and around Ukraine continues to be at the top of our joint agenda. The EU fully joins you and the Parliamentary Assembly in reiterating our support for Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders, including the Crimean peninsula, and in condemning Russia's violations of our principles. We also call for a sustained ceasefire, which is vital to achieve a sustainable political solution in line with OSCE principles and to improve the lives of people on the ground. We share

your support for the OSCE SMM, which must have full, safe and unhindered access throughout Ukraine, including to the Ukraine-Russia state border.

We also noted your visit to the GUAM Parliamentary Assembly in Tbilisi in December and welcome the attention dedicated to the resolution of protracted conflicts. In addition to being OSCE Parliamentary Assembly's partner organisation, GUAM plays an important role as a regional co-operation format between countries that share the experience of an ongoing or protracted conflict.

Mr. Tsereteli, as you rightly said in your address to the Ministerial Council in December last year, real security can never be achieved without securing human rights. Breaches of human rights and fundamental freedoms should never be accepted as the new normal and we must act upon them. This is particularly true when referring to conflict situations, which unfortunately continue to burden the OSCE area. We would welcome more detail on your priority human rights concerns this year, and ideas for how we can work together to ensure implementation of existing commitments, as well as agreement of new ones. We appreciate the existing cooperation with the Parliamentary Assembly in this regard and we look forward to increasing it in the future.

Furthermore, we highlight the importance of the Parliamentary Assembly's co-operation with ODIHR in election monitoring and warmly welcome that it has improved significantly over the last years. The two institutions each play an important role in carrying out the gold standard election observation methodology that the OSCE is known for, and that plays a crucial role in upholding our joint commitments.

In addition to the statutory meetings of the Parliamentary Assembly, we consider the continued focus on issues such as migration and preventing and combatting terrorism as timely. We also welcome the work conducted in the Ad Hoc Committees, groups and by the Special Representatives. In addition, we welcome the OSCE PA's continued attention to issues across all three dimensions of the OSCE, such as human rights and fundamental freedoms, cybersecurity and gender. We support the OSCE PA's continued liaison with key stakeholders and partners, notably the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, with the view of further increasing dialogue between the OSCE and other international organisations on different levels.

We thank you for your call to secure, in time, the necessary financial, human and material resources to ensure the functionality of our Organization. We agree that this Organization, in addition to being an important platform for political dialogue, needs to be result-oriented and deliver concrete results. You have also touched upon field missions, rightly indicating that they are one of the most tangible ways of demonstrating the benefits the OSCE can bring to the citizens and participating States hosting them.

As you say, security is not a given, but a continuing process. It is for this purpose that the OSCE was established and to this end that our common values and commitments should be upheld.

We thank you once again for your interesting presentation and look forward to welcoming the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly to its Winter Meeting here in Vienna on 22 and 23 of February.

The Candidate Countries the FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO* and ALBANIA*, the Country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and Potential Candidate BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA, and the EFTA countries ICELAND and LIECHTENSTEIN, members of the European Economic Area, as well as UKRAINE, the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA, GEORGIA, ANDORRA and SAN MARINO align themselves with this statement.

* The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.