



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Permanent Council N° 1177 Vienna, 1 March 2018

EU Statement in Response to the Report by the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities, Amb. Vuk Žugić

The European Union warmly welcomes the coordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities, Amb. Vuk Žugić, to the Permanent Council and thanks him for his report. We also thank you for the timely distribution of your report. We are in favour of strong OSCE engagement in the Economic and Environmental Dimension since it is an integral part of the OSCE's comprehensive approach to security.

We welcome the adoption of the Ministerial Council Decision in December in Vienna on promoting economic participation. It importantly adds to our commitments, underlining that economic and social efforts such as job creation, better access to education, vocational training and the labour market, as well as improvement of conditions for employment and entrepreneurship are important for stability and security. We also appreciate the substantial discussions we had last year on greening our economies and fostering our environmental cooperation, and regret that consensus could not be reached on a Ministerial Council Decision on this topic last year. We also highlight that it is vital that the gender aspect is fully embedded in every activity undertaken.

We attach particular importance to your work on good economic and environmental governance and the fight against corruption, and appreciate that these topics remain among the priorities of your office's work. Good governance and economic development are two sides of the same coin. Strengthening good governance inter alia through combatting corruption and fostering the rule of law is crucial to improve the business and investment climate across the OSCE region, which in turn contributes to stability and security. This means strong and independent institutions, the enforcement of legislation and modernised public administrations that deliver

services and not bills to businesses. Also, a well-governed and reliable legal and economic environment can contribute substantially to trustful and prosperous relations with partner countries. In this regard, we commend once again the Italian Chairmanship for having included anti-corruption among its priorities and stress the importance of ensuring good cooperation between the Office of the Co-ordinator and the recently appointed Special Representative of the OSCE CiO.

We also appreciate your continued work on connectivity through transport and trade facilitation in line with the Ministerial Council Decision on Strengthening Good Governance and Promoting Connectivity.

Strengthening the resilience of non-nuclear critical energy networks, increasing energy efficiency and share of renewable energy in the national energy structures are an effective means to further ensure energy security of the participating States. We look forward to continuing the work on the security aspects of these important energy-related topics.

The OSCE also has a contribution to make to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement. In this context, we appreciate your activities on issues such as climate change, disaster risk reduction and water management, as well as the OSCE's cooperation in the ENVSEC initiative and with Aarhus Centres. On Monday this week the EU at a Council meeting reconfirmed its strong commitment to effective climate action, including addressing the nexus between climate change and security. Regional actors such as the OSCE are important partners in this endeavour.

We continue to attach importance to migration-related activities in the OSCE. The OSCE is already doing valuable migration-related work in different areas. We would appreciate more information on how your office supports existing wider OSCE efforts to implement the Hamburg Decision.

We support regional activities and welcome that close coordination between the Office of the Coordinator and the OSCE field presences is a priority for you. We attach great importance to the active involvement and feedback of field operations concerning second dimension activities and strongly support their participation in our discussions here in Vienna. We also encourage the continued involvement of the private sector and of beneficiaries of OSCE activities in participating States in order

to hear their direct assessment on 2nd dimension activities and to help identify best practices and possible improvements.

Furthermore, we welcome close cooperation with other relevant international actors such as the OECD, UNODC and UNECE to ensure that OSCE activities add real value and to avoid the duplication of efforts.

In conclusion, we thank you and your team for your valuable work and wish you every success.

The Candidate Countries the FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO*, SERBIA* 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, Serbia and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.