



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Permanent Council No. 1324 Vienna, 15 July 2021

EU Statement in response to the address by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Poland, Zbigniew Rau

The European Union warmly welcomes the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Poland, H.E. Zbigniew Rau, to the Permanent Council. We thank H.E. for the presentation of the priorities of the Polish Chairmanship for 2022.

We greatly appreciate Poland's readiness to assume the responsibility of leading our Organization at a time when the region is marked by multiple security challenges and violations of international law and OSCE principles and commitments. We are especially proud that another EU Member State takes on the challenge. It is an unequivocal reminder of the importance that the European Union attaches to this Organization.

We welcome Poland's approach of fostering dialogue while guarding the OSCE principles and commitments, upholding the OSCE comprehensive concept of security, as well as the three main objectives that will guide the Polish Chairmanship. The security and stability of our region crucially depend on strict compliance with international law and full respect for the rules agreed by all 57 participating States.

We welcome that the peaceful resolution of conflicts in the OSCE area in line with the OSCE principles and commitments will be at the top of the Chair's agenda, and hope to see tangible progress in this field, with a view to strengthening the overall security in the OSCE region and bringing real improvements to the conflict-affected populations. In this context, we wish to also highlight the Vilnius Ministerial Council

decision 3/11 on elements of the conflict cycle, and call for increased attention for its implementation.

We continue to strongly condemn Russia's continuous violation of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine by its acts of aggression and its illegal annexation of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol. We welcome Poland's continued focus on finding a sustainable political resolution to this conflict. We also regret that Russia is trying to advance a false narrative that it is merely a "mediator" of a so called "internal Ukrainian conflict". In this context, we again urge Russia, as a party to the conflict, to act constructively within the Trilateral Contact Group and the Normandy Format and to implement in full the Minsk Agreements, that it has committed itself to.

The EU welcomes the ceasefire on the ground following the signature of the trilateral statement by Armenia, Azerbaijan and Russia on 9 November 2020. We support the call made by the Co-Chairs of the Minsk Group on 13 April to resume the high-level political dialogue between Armenia and Azerbaijan under their auspices as soon as possible. We strongly encourage the parties to jointly agree on the various parameters allowing the long-term implementation of a set of stabilisation, post-ceasefire rehabilitation and confidence-building measures. In addition, the EU recalls that the unresolved conflicts in the Republic of Moldova and in Georgia continue to negatively impact peace and stability and can be resolved only if the parties involved demonstrate strong political will to solve them in line with the OSCE principles, act constructively within the agreed negotiating formats, and implement their respective commitments.

We welcome Poland's commitment to promoting arms control and CSBMs implementation, which remain crucial for security in the OSCE area, particularly in the current security environment. We recall that transparency in the field of military activities is one of the main commitments to which all OSCE participating States have signed-up to. We agree with our Polish colleagues that it is essential to continue discussions on this issue. The massive build-up of forces and armaments by Russia at its borders with Ukraine, in the illegally annexed Crimean peninsula and in the Black Sea earlier this year that triggered the activation by Ukraine of the risk reduction mechanism under the Vienna Document underscore the importance of such dialogue.

We highly value the Structured Dialogue, which we are ready to develop further in accordance with the Hamburg Declaration, as a transparent, inclusive process, owned and driven by participating States, without a predetermined outcome and of high relevance for the EU. We stand ready to work towards creating an environment conducive to reinvigorating Conventional Arms Control and CSBMs in Europe together with our commitment to full implementation of the existing commitments in the politico-military area. We remain committed to the substantial modernization of the Vienna Document, as expressed inter alia in the joint proposal supported by 34 participating States.

We will continue to pay increased attention to the Women, Peace and Security agenda by promoting the full, equal and meaningful participation of women in conflict resolution and peace processes, as well as in the security sector. We are committed to actively supporting further actions in this field.

The European Union welcomes Poland's intended focus within the First Dimension on non-military security issues, in particular cybersecurity, counter terrorism and transnational organised crime.

On cyber/ICT security, we believe that the confidence-building measures developed by the OSCE constitute a valuable tool to reduce the risks of conflict stemming from the use of ICTs, and we support their full implementation. The EU also attaches paramount importance to countering terrorism, which is one of the most imminent threats to peace, security, stability as well as to the enjoyment of human rights in the OSCE area and beyond. We are convinced that effectively preventing and countering radicalisation and violent extremism requires a holistic approach, such as governmental collaboration with all relevant members of society, in particular civil society. Finally, we also welcome the attention given to combating organised crime, building on the adoption of the Declaration on transnational organised crime at the last Ministerial Council in Tirana and on the continued priority placed on this topic this year by the Swedish Chairpersonship.

Regarding the Economic and Environmental Dimension, we welcome Poland's decision to focus on both economic and environmental elements of post-pandemic recovery and modernisation of our economies. We appreciate the plan to put strong emphasis on elements of sustainability and inclusivity as well as the focus on innovation and use of digital technologies. Greening the economy, protecting

biodiversity, enhancing sustainable use of natural resources and developing sustainable connectivity are key elements of our recovery and thus we commend the upcoming Chairpersonship for reflecting it in their plan for the next year. We welcome that the interconnectedness of resilient economies and environment is highlighted and that balance of economic and environmental topics will be ensured.

We welcome that Poland – the host country of the ODIHR - will attach special importance to political support to the OSCE autonomous institutions: ODIHR, HCNM and RFOM. Their strong and flexible mandates play a crucial role in supporting OSCE participating States in the implementation of the OSCE commitments. It is the responsibility of all of us to preserve the institutions and their strong mandates, and ensure their proper functioning.

We welcome that the CiO's efforts will be guided by a human-centred perspective, as lasting security cannot be sustained without respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, democracy and the rule of law. Civil society and Human Rights Defenders including journalists and media actors, are essential partners in this regard and we remain firm about safeguarding the inclusive character of the OSCE in relation to civil society organizations. Promoting and mainstreaming gender equality throughout all dimensions is an important aspect of advancing the OSCE's concept of comprehensive security. We welcome the special attention that the CiO will pay to the young generation, the promotion of freedom of religion or belief, and human rights and fundamental freedoms in the digital sphere.

We commend Poland for successfully chairing the Mediterranean Partners for Cooperation Group and we look forward to the OSCE Mediterranean Conference in October. As the challenges we face go beyond the borders of our Organization, we recall our belief that the security of the OSCE area is inextricably linked to that of the Mediterranean region, as reaffirmed at the Milan Ministerial Council.

We share your view that responses to the current security environment should not be revolutionary as the fundamental principles and commitments guiding our Organization remain valid. Rebuilding trust requires restoring respect for such fundamental principles and commitments enshrined in our founding documents. As you are about to take a lead role in this endeavor, we wish to assure you that you will be able to count on the full support of the European Union and its Members States.

The Candidate Countries REPUBLIC of NORTH MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO* and ALBANIA*, and the EFTA countries ICELAND and LIECHTENSTEIN, members of the European Economic Area, as well as the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA, GEORGIA, ANDORRA and SAN MARINO align themselves with this statement.

* Republic of North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.