



EUROPEAN UNION

**OSCE Permanent Council No. 1194
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EU Statement in Response to the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office Mr. Enzo Moavero Milanese, Italian Minister of Foreign Affairs

The European Union and its Member States warmly welcome the new OSCE Chairperson in Office, Italian Minister of Foreign Affairs Enzo Moavero Milanese to the first meeting of the Permanent Council after the Summer recess.

After the brief respite of the recess, our attention is again drawn to the issues of the greatest concern facing the OSCE region, notably the violation of international law and of fundamental OSCE principles.

The principles and commitments we agreed in Helsinki and Paris remain the foundation for sustainable peace in Europe. There is no alternative to urgently restoring respect for these fundamental principles and commitments. Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea and Sevastopol, which we will not recognize, and the clear violation of Ukrainian sovereignty and territorial integrity by acts of aggression by the Russian armed forces since February 2014, remain the most serious violations of our fundamental OSCE principles and commitments today. We call on the Russian Federation to reverse acts that contravene fundamental OSCE principles and international law. We therefore welcome that the resolution of this conflict remains at the top of the Italian CiO agenda.

We fully share your call for the full implementation of the Minsk Agreements, unconditional respect of the ceasefire and full, safe and unhindered access for

the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission throughout Ukraine. These are important steps toward a sustainable political solution, which upholds respect for Ukraine's sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity within its internationally recognised borders and in line with OSCE principles and commitments. We strongly support the efforts in the Normandy format as well as the work in the Trilateral Contact Group to reach such a solution. We also reaffirm our strong support for the SMM and condemn any attempts to intimidate our monitors or to impede their work.

Protracted conflicts in Georgia, in the Republic of Moldova and the Nagorno Karabakh conflict continue to deserve our attention and we appreciate Italy's commitment to continue strengthening the OSCE's work to address such conflicts through the existing formats.

The European Union's commitment to a peaceful resolution of the conflict in Georgia remains as strong as ever. The EU reiterates its firm support to the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Georgia within its internationally recognized borders. The European Union remains committed to its engagement in the Geneva International Discussions and its presence on the ground through the European Union Monitoring Mission.

We also welcome the strong commitment to resolving the Transnistrian conflict shown by the Special Representative of the CiO, Mr. Franco Frattini, and that of the OSCE Mission to Moldova. The EU supports a peaceful and comprehensive settlement of the Transnistrian conflict on the basis of respect for the territorial integrity and sovereignty of the Republic of Moldova within its internationally recognized borders, with a special status for Transnistria. We welcome the adoption of the Rome Protocol following the meeting in the "5+2" format which took place on 29 and 30 May this year.

Furthermore, the European Union reiterates its support for the Minsk Group and its full confidence in the Co-Chairs to achieve progress in the search for a peaceful, equitable and lasting settlement of the conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh, which is vital for the future of the region. We call on the parties to take more advantage of the efforts of the Co-Chairs.

In many parts of the OSCE region we see increasing restrictions on civil society, a crackdown on human rights and fundamental freedoms, growing pressures on human rights defenders, attacks on journalists and other media actors and increasing intolerance, which pose serious challenges to our security. There can be no lasting security without respect for human rights, fundamental freedoms, democracy and the rule of law. Thus our human dimension commitments are more relevant than ever and the upcoming Human Dimension Implementation Meeting in Warsaw provides an opportunity to review their implementation and share information and best practices with representatives of civil society. Safeguarding the open character of the OSCE events with regard to the participation of civil society representatives is of primary importance to the EU.

We agree with you that the autonomous institutions play an indispensable role for our common security across the OSCE area and we therefore welcome preserving and strengthening their role. Likewise, we highly value the OSCE field operations.

We reiterate our strong commitment to full implementation in letter and spirit of the existing commitments in the politico-military dimension, which is essential for enhancing military transparency and political stability in the OSCE area. We remain strong supporters of the Vienna Document modernisation. We also emphasise the need to work towards creating an environment conducive to reinvigorating Conventional Arms Control and Confidence and Security Building Measures. We value the Structured Dialogue as a means to address the current and future challenges and risks in the OSCE area, to foster a greater understanding on these issues that could serve as a common, solid basis for a way forward through an open, transparent and inclusive exchange of views carried out in good faith.

Mr. Minister, the OSCE makes a valuable contribution in preventing and countering transnational and emerging threats. OSCE capacity building efforts across the security sector are most useful and help to implement UN commitments. You rightly emphasise the threat posed by the return of Foreign

Terrorist Fighters and more generally violent extremism and radicalisation leading to terrorism, as we need not only to counter terrorism but also to prevent it. We welcome your continued focus on cyber and ICT related security issues and look forward to further implementation of our CBMs and to the conference in Rome next month. We stress also here that respecting human rights and working with civil society contributes to the effectiveness and sustainability of our efforts to prevent and counter transnational threats.

In the economic and environmental dimension we appreciate your focus on the digital transformation and human capital development and look forward to discussion of these areas next week at the Economic and Environmental Forum in Prague. We would welcome opportunities to discuss the security implications of climate change and we also welcome the continued attention to questions of good governance, in particular anti-corruption.

Our Partner Countries face similar challenges so that strengthening our cooperation with them should remain a priority. We share your call to look with attention at the Mediterranean and the challenges arising from the southern neighbourhood, recognizing the impact they have on our OSCE region. In this regard, the coming OSCE Mediterranean Conference in Malaga will be an excellent opportunity to strengthen our partnership. With migration flows being one of the main issues in this context we see the OSCE as a valuable platform for dialogue among countries of origin, transit and destination, complementing the important work done by other international organisations.

Along with dialogue and ownership, your motto incorporates the key concept of responsibility, both political and budgetary. We all want a well-functioning Organization and it is the responsibility of all the participating States to adopt decisions that enable it to continue carrying out its tasks effectively. In particular, we welcome the leadership role exercised by Italy on the issue of scales of contribution and we reiterate the need to find an agreement on new scales of contributions before 31 December so as to ensure the financial stability of the Organization. We also welcome the Italian Chairmanship's

efforts to introduce a new biennial budget cycle for the OSCE, to increase the Organization's effectiveness in the future.

In concluding, our attention must now turn to working responsibly to pave the way for strong results across all three dimensions at the Ministerial Council in Milano. To this end, we want to stress that you can of course count on the convinced political support of the European Union.

I thank you for your kind attention.

The Candidate Countries the FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO* and ALBANIA* and the EFTA countries ICELAND, LIECHTENSTEIN and NORWAY, members of the European Economic Area, as well as UKRAINE, 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.