



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Permanent Council No. 1313 Vienna, 13 May 2021

EU Statement on the occasion of Europe Day

Madam Chair, 9 May is Europe Day. As UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres said in his message on the occasion, “71 years ago Robert Schuman set in motion one of the great projects of the century”. Robert Schuman launched a visionary project of European nations living together in peace and prosperity, making the very idea of war among them unthinkable. It was remarkable as not too long before, the same countries had fought two World Wars that exacted a huge price in millions of lost lives and unprecedented material destruction. Robert Schuman’s vision was the beginning of what is now the European Union. 71 years later, much has been achieved: long lasting peace, improved security, intense political and economic cooperation, solidarity, social cohesion and a continuous sharing of cultures and ideas.

The European Union is founded on the values of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities. These same values are at the heart of the OSCE concept of comprehensive and cooperative security and the EU and its Member States make a significant contribution to the vitality and relevance of the OSCE. The EU and its Member States make up almost half of the OSCE membership and together contribute 60 per cent of the unified budget and the SMM budget. The fact that I am speaking today on behalf of the EU with all its Member States, and also the aligning countries, is a sign of this unity we share.

In our globalized and rapidly changing world the foundational values of the EU are more relevant than ever for our citizens, our partners and all those who want to work cooperatively to strengthen rules-based multilateralism, peace and security, sustainable development, free and fair trade, human rights and democracy.

Since its creation, the European Union has mastered multiple challenges. The EU can and must also learn from these crises, closely involving its citizens and communities. The Conference on the Future of Europe, the inaugural event of which took place in Strasbourg on 9 May, will open a new space for debate with citizens to address Europe's challenges and priorities. EU citizens from all walks of life and corners of the Union will be able to participate, with young Europeans playing a central role in shaping the future of the European project. As Commission President von der Leyen said, « this is a real opportunity to bring Europeans together and to rally around a common ambition for our future just as previous generations did ».

Through the many important changes in our history since 1950, what is constant is the determination that our project will continue to be a force for good in the world. The EU will continue to work with determination in the OSCE, and elsewhere, to uphold its founding values and to share the security benefits that derive from peace, democracy and human rights on the European continent and beyond to the benefit of all our citizens.

The Candidate Countries REPUBLIC of NORTH MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO*, SERBIA* and ALBANIA*, the Country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and Potential Candidate BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA, as well as UKRAINE, 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.