



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Permanent Council Nr 1039 Vienna, 12 February 2015

EU Statement in Response to the Chairpersons of the Three Committees

The European Union and its Member States thank the Chairs of the three committees for their presentations. We acknowledge that the situation in and around Ukraine inevitably will continue to influence discussions in the committees this year.

We congratulate Ambassador Istrate on his new position as Chair of the **Security Committee**. Our priority here remains the implementation of the OSCE's transnational threats (TNTs) related decisions, including the 2005 Borders Concept. This should be done in close cooperation with other relevant international stakeholders such as UNODC. We welcome the priority given to counter-terrorism this year. We look forward to appropriate follow-up on the Basel Declarations on foreign terrorist fighters and kidnapping for ransom, including in the Security Committee through voluntary reporting. In this regard, the Chair's Paper for the next Committee meeting will be a useful starting point for further discussions.

We need to continue to give special attention and support to the cyber Informal Working Group (IWG). We are pleased that the dates for the three capitals-level meetings this year have already been set and welcome the "Best Guess" paper circulated by the Chair. We should continue to implement the first set of cyber CBMs and work on a second set, which could be adopted during the Serbian Chairmanship.

We congratulate Ambassador Leko on his new position as Chair of the **Economic and Environmental Committee**. We appreciate the continued practice of organising thematic meetings. We welcome the focus of the Economic and

Environmental Forum on water governance, highlighting its clear link to conflict prevention, security and its relevance to the OSCE.

The fight against corruption remains an important priority for the EU. We commend Ambassador Leko for launching the informal 'Group of Friends of the EEC Chair' on the implementation of the Basel Decision on Prevention of Corruption. We will actively participate in this group and support its Greek chair in producing a report containing options as foreseen in the Basel decision. We look forward to Ambassador Leko presenting this report to the Permanent Council. The focus on the fight against corruption at this year's EEDIM provides an opportunity to further consider the implications of the report.

We welcome the comprehensive agenda for the **Human Dimension Committee** in 2015 presented by Ambassador Kvile. The EU fully supports the continued use of the standing agenda and the practice of voluntary reporting, which we will continue to contribute to. We encourage all participating States not only to provide reports, but to engage with the reports made by other states in the same manner they do on other agenda items.

We hope the work of the human dimension committee in 2015 will both facilitate important discussions on how implementation of our joint commitments can be strengthened, and contribute to progressing the work of our organisation in the human dimension. In this regard, we welcome that a number of outstanding issues from our discussions last year, namely freedom of expression and freedom of association and peaceful assembly and the issue of torture, including enforced disappearances, will remain high on the Committee's agenda in 2015.

We welcome the proposal to hold joint committee meetings this year. The added value of joint meetings should be the guiding principle when deciding on holding them. In this context, we welcome efforts to avoid overlapping meetings and to work towards de-conflicting schedules. We believe a cross-dimensional and inclusive approach should always guide the work of the three committees, not only in the context of joint meetings. For example, gender equality and good governance are cross-dimensional issues that we believe can be better

mainstreamed into the work of each dimension. We hope there will be further work on this this year.

Mr Chairman, nearly a decade since their establishment the three committees continue to make our consultations more participatory, interactive and transparent. We welcome the active participation of the autonomous OSCE institutions, OSCE field operations, and, not least, civil society including NGOs in committee meetings. We encourage the continuation of this approach and hope it can be strengthened further.

Finally, we wish the Chairs of the committees every success in their endeavours this year. Ambassadors Istrate, Leko and Kvile, you can count on our full support.

The Candidate Countries the FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO*, ICELAND+ and ALBANIA*, the Country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and Potential Candidate BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA, and the EFTA country LIECHTENSTEIN, member of the European Economic Area, as well as UKRAINE, the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA, GEORGIA, ANDORRA, MONACO 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.

+ Iceland continues to be a member of the EFTA and of the European Economic Area.