



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Permanent Council Nr 1104 Vienna, 9 June 2016

EU Statement in Response to the address by the Secretary General of the Council of Europe, H.E. Thorbjørn Jagland

The European Union and its Member States warmly welcome H.E. Thorbjørn Jagland back to the Permanent Council and thank him for his address.

Mr Secretary-General, since your last visit to the Permanent Council in October 2013, European security and peace has been recently jeopardised by Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea and Sevastopol and its actions in eastern Ukraine. Russia's violations of basic OSCE commitments represent a significant challenge to our fundamental principles. Our region has also seen an increase in other challenges, such as terrorism, and the migration and refugee crisis.

The OSCE, the Council of Europe and the European Union share common values and principles and we remain resolute in defending them. Therefore we wholeheartedly support the Council of Europe's core mission of promoting and protecting human rights, fundamental freedoms, democracy and the rule of law. With this in mind, we appreciate the continuous dialogue and practical co-operation that takes place between the OSCE and the Council of Europe and underline the mutually reinforcing nature of our two Organisations.

The existing contacts between the representatives and experts of both Organisations, and the presence of the Council of Europe's Office in Vienna already provide a good basis for substantive interaction. The EU supports informal networking and interactions on both programmatic activities and information-sharing between the OSCE Secretariat, Institutions and field operations and their Council of Europe's counterparts, in accordance with their respective mandates. Active co-operation between OSCE field operations and Council of Europe offices is also important in ensuring the efficiency and effectiveness of activities in the field.

In this connection, we welcome the ongoing work on combating trafficking in human beings, and in the field of election observation and support. We would support further cooperation in other areas where joint work has already proven productive, including freedom of the media, human rights education, improving the situation of Roma and Sinti, and combating discrimination on the ground of sexual orientation or gender identity. We also welcome the work of the Council of Europe on preventing and countering terrorism, the fight against cyber-crime, and its activities with regards to the migration and refugee crisis in Europe.

In conclusion, Mr. Chairperson, we would like to thank H.E. the Secretary General of the Council of Europe for his address, and wish him success with the continuation of his work.

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