



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Permanent Council No. 1253 Vienna, 19 December 2019

EU Statement in response to the Address by the Special Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office on Combating Corruption, Prof. Paola Severino

1. The EU warmly welcomes Special Representative Paola Severino to the Permanent Council and thanks her for the presentation. Corruption affects all OSCE participating States, including EU Member States. We are convinced that efforts to prevent and combat this global phenomenon must be stepped up. In the OSCE, it is therefore one of our key priorities in the Economic and Environmental dimension.
2. In this context, we appreciate your contribution to raising awareness, encouraging cooperation and sharing of best practices while respecting the local contexts and focusing on engaging civil society and the private sector. We would like to recognize as well your contributions to conferences and seminars, including the OSCE High-Level Regional Conference on the role of digital technologies in reducing corruption risks in Almaty, the seminar on anti-letterbox companies' law, held in Bratislava and the seminar on the contribution of accountable and effective public institutions to the SDGs held in Baku.
3. Corruption represents a threat to security and does not occur in isolation. It is an enabler for other forms of economic crime including money laundering, as well as for organized crime and terrorism. Corruption is also a threat to democracy, good governance and fair competition. It undermines the rule of law and the fundamental values on which our societies are based, erodes trust and creates a climate in which crimes and impunity prosper. It is therefore critical to tackle corruption in a

comprehensive way, with appropriate legislation and solid institutions which carry out their mandate without political interference.

4. In the EU we continuously work on further improving our rules and policies on combatting and preventing corruption. The EU is striving to ensure a common high standard of legislation, either specifically on corruption, or incorporating anti-corruption provisions in other sectoral legislation. To give a recent example, the European Commission adopted a new Directive on the protection of persons who report breaches of Union law (that came into force on 17 December 2019) and protects whistle-blowers across a wide range of sectors. Integrity and anti-corruption policies are also increasingly part of other EU policies such as legislation on anti-money laundering and public procurement, on confiscation of criminal assets, or the disclosure of information by private sector entities. Anti-corruption policy also plays an important role in our internal economic governance and in trade negotiations. Another key development is the setting up of the European Public Prosecutor's Office, which will be competent to investigate and prosecute crimes affecting the EU budget.
5. We also attach the utmost importance to the fight against corruption in our neighbourhood policy as well as in the EU accession process. The EU focuses on assisting these partner countries in effectively implementing their anti-corruption frameworks through operational cooperation and political dialogues incentivising them to provide a convincing track record in this area.
6. Rule of law and anti-corruption figure prominently in the 20 deliverables for 2020 in the EU Eastern Partnership. This includes the establishment of sustainable structures to prevent and fight corruption, ensuring that legislation and institutional changes are implemented effectively, as well as enhancing transparency of work and financing of public institutions and strengthening the fight against money laundering.

7. In light of the ongoing 8th session of the Conference of the States Parties to the UNCAC in Abu Dhabi, we would be interested in learning more about your approach on exploiting synergies and avoiding duplications in particular with UNODC and the International Anti-Corruption Academy.
8. We welcome the planned focus of the Albanian Chairmanship on fighting corruption and we look forward to continuing to work towards our common goal to prevent and combat corrupt practices in all forms and at all levels for the benefit of our societies and economies.

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, and the EFTA countries ICELAND and LIECHTENSTEIN, members of the European Economic Area, as well as UKRAINE, the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA, GEORGIA 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.