



## EUROPEAN UNION

### **OSCE Special Permanent Council No.1548 Vienna, 15 January 2026**

#### **EU Statement in Response to the Address by the Federal Councillor Ignazio Cassis, Head of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs of Switzerland**

Your Excellency,

The European Union warmly welcomes you to the Permanent Council. Let me reassure you of EU's full support in your efforts to lead the Organisation, safeguard its achievements, and honour our shared principles and commitments. At a time when the very foundations of European security are undermined, your principled approach is essential.

The 50th anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act, which we marked last year, reconfirmed its continued validity. You can count on our full support in leading efforts to uphold and restore respect for the Helsinki principles, as they are neither negotiable nor subject to revision or re-interpretation.

The EU firmly believes that upholding and implementing international law and OSCE commitments, ensuring accountability, along with meaningful dialogue, are the only ways to effectively address cross-dimensional challenges, resolve disputes, build confidence and achieve peace, security, and stability. Honest and genuine engagement from all participating States is essential to achieving this goal.

Your Excellency,

Switzerland's Chairpersonship comes in critical times for European and global security and stability. Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine continues to inflict immense suffering, civilian casualties and destruction. We deplore the

civilian casualties caused by the latest Russian strikes against Kyiv and other Ukrainian cities, which also deprived the Ukrainian citizens of access to essential services at a time of harsh weather conditions and humanitarian need. Intentionally directing attacks against civilians and civilian objects, as well as indiscriminate attacks, constitute violations of international humanitarian law and amount to war crimes. We support all the efforts towards achieving a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in Ukraine, grounded in the principles of the UN Charter and international law, as well as of the Helsinki Final Act. We are confident Switzerland will make full use of its role as Chairpersonship to hold Russia accountable for its war of aggression and non-compliance with OSCE principles and commitments.

We also strongly support preserving the Organisation's continued engagement in and support to Ukraine. OSCE leadership, executive structures, and autonomous institutions must continue the Organisation's ongoing assistance to Ukraine, notably through the Special Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office/Project Co-ordinator in Ukraine, the Support Programme for Ukraine (SPU), ODIHR and RFoM. OSCE, through ODIHR and Human Dimension Mechanisms, can also further contribute to the efforts to ensure accountability for all international crimes and human rights violations and abuses in the context of Russia's war of aggression.

We need to continue addressing within the OSCE the multifaceted negative cross-regional and cross-dimensional impact of the war and supporting all affected countries, in particular the Republic of Moldova.

OSCE remains indispensable in promoting peace and stability across the region, as well as in supporting participating States address a broad spectrum of risks and challenges that extend beyond military risks, such as cybersecurity, foreign information manipulation and interference, or security implications of climate change, in line with existing commitments. We welcome your intention to mobilize science and technology for cooperative security.

We also share your view that respect for human rights, fundamental freedoms and the rule of law is crucial to advancing the OSCE's concept of comprehensive

security and we reiterate the vital role civil society organisations and human rights defenders play in ensuring accountability and sustaining vibrant democracies. In light of democratic backsliding, human rights violations and shrinking space for civil society in many parts of the OSCE area, as well as the connection between internal repression and external aggression, efforts to honour our joint commitments in the human dimension must be accelerated. The work of the OSCE autonomous institutions is essential in this regard.

The challenges in the OSCE region extend beyond its borders. It is therefore important to strengthen our partnerships with our Mediterranean and Asian Partners.

Your Excellency,

The European Union supports efforts aimed at strengthening the OSCE's efficiency and functionality, along with upholding the agreed principles and commitments. We use this opportunity to restate our unwavering support for the work and mandates of the OSCE field missions, the OSCE Secretariat, and the autonomous institutions—ODIHR, RFoM, and HCNM. We emphasise that it is our shared responsibility to preserve their strong mandates and guarantee their effective functioning and adequate budgets. We support your efforts for a swift adoption of a unified budget for 2026. We call on all participating States to honour their commitments and provide the OSCE with adequate resources, enabling it to function effectively across its three dimensions and all its structures.

We look forward to progress on the appointment of the 2027 Chair and express our full support for Cyprus' bid to lead the organization.

We wish you and your dedicated team every success.

*Albania, Andorra, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Republic of Moldova, Monaco, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Norway, San Marino and Ukraine align themselves with this statement.*