



EUROPEAN UNION

## **OSCE Permanent Council No. 1558**

**Vienna, 19 March 2026**

### **EU Statement in response to the Report by the Director of ODIHR, Maria Telalian**

1. The European Union warmly welcomes the Director of ODIHR, Maria Telalian, back to the Permanent Council and thanks her for the presentation of the 2025 annual report. We commend ODIHR's outstanding work, despite budgetary and staffing constraints, and strongly support its mandate and autonomy.
2. The EU will continue to firmly support ODIHR's valuable work for the promotion and protection of democracy, the rule of law and human rights in the OSCE, and to call on participating States to respect and support its mandate and autonomy.
3. Russia's illegal, unprovoked and unjustified war of aggression against Ukraine is ongoing. It is causing much suffering, increased civilian casualties, and destruction, making ODIHR's contribution through the Ukraine Human Rights Monitoring Initiative much needed. The latest interim reports provided additional credible, impartial documentation of violations of international human rights and humanitarian law. We also thank ODIHR for providing technical and administrative assistance to the expert missions under the Moscow Mechanism. The EU is firmly committed to ensuring full accountability for all international crimes and human rights violations and abuses stemming from Russia's war of aggression.
4. We value that ODIHR continues to adapt to new realities, including to the increasing role of new technologies, and thus commend ODIHR's updated election observation methodology. We reiterate our continuous support to ODIHR's engagement in election observation across the OSCE region, as well as to its methodology, which is globally recognised, applies in the same manner to all countries, and is based on the principles of independence, impartiality and professionalism.

5. ODIHR's legal assistance is particularly needed in challenging times: to quote Director Telalian, it functions "*as an early-warning and prevention tool*". For 25 years, ODIHR has been supporting participating states strengthen their electoral laws to ensure the transparency and integrity of elections and bring countries' legal frameworks in line with OSCE commitments and other international standards.

6. We value ODIHR's monitoring of peaceful assemblies, which has resulted in 150 monitoring activities over the past 15 years, conducted in 36 participating States. In light of increasingly disproportionate and violent responses to protests worldwide, the EU protects and promotes the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association.

7. We value the expert guidance that ODIHR has continued to offer to the participating States in order to support the implementation of shared commitments in the Human Dimension, including on ensuring inclusive and diverse societies by promoting tolerance and combating all forms of discrimination, preventing and combating hate crimes and promoting gender equality. The EU reiterates its commitment to equality and non-discrimination, to the entitlement of all persons to enjoy the full range of human rights and fundamental freedoms, and to the protection of those who are in disadvantaged, vulnerable and marginalised situations.

8. We thank ODIHR for assisting the Finnish Chairpersonship in organising the 2025 Warsaw Human Dimension Conference. In absence of the annual mandated Human Dimension Implementation Meeting, WHDC offered a unique platform to engage with civil society representatives and other participating States on issues pertaining to our commonly agreed OSCE commitments. We reiterate our call on all participating States to agree on the relevant decisions needed to hold the Human Dimension Implementation Meeting. We reiterate our full trust in Poland as the host country of ODIHR and its events and reject any suggestions to relocate the seat of ODIHR from Warsaw.

9. We welcome the Office's continued efforts to support human rights defenders and civil society. The EU actively supports, promotes and empowers a diverse and independent civil society. We strongly condemn any form of reprisals against human rights defenders (HRDs) and civil society organisations as well as all forms of transnational repression.

10. In the context of ongoing discussions on OSCE Unified Budget and anticipated budget reductions, we call on all participating States to ensure that ODIHR is adequately staffed and resourced in order to carry out its vital work in accordance with its mandate.

11. In conclusion, we thank Director Telalian for her professionalism, integrity, and impartiality in fulfilling ODIHR's mandate. Our appreciation equally goes to the ODIHR staff for its dedicated service to this Organisation and to the participating States. In conclusion, Director Telalian, we wish you and your engaged team continued success in implementing ODIHR's mandate. We look forward to working with you in the years ahead.

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