



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Permanent Council No. 1580 Vienna, 8 October 2026

EU Statement in response to the Address by the President of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), Mirjana Spoljaric-Egger

1. The European Union warmly welcomes Mirjana Spoljaric-Egger, President of the International Committee of the Red Cross. We take this opportunity to pay tribute to the unique work carried out by the ICRC in challenging contexts worldwide and reassure you of the EU's continued support.
2. We reiterate our commitment to international humanitarian law and to the humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence as well as to preventing politicization of humanitarian aid.
3. The EU highly values the ICRC as an independent and neutral organisation, which ensures humanitarian protection and assistance for victims of armed conflicts and other situations of violence. We commend the work of the ICRC in protecting the lives and dignity of victims of armed conflicts. We especially appreciate your work on missing persons, visiting detention facilities, facilitating exchange of conflict related detainees, and confidence building measures, as well as your role in ensuring the respect of international humanitarian law and the engagement in humanitarian diplomacy. This is a concrete and valuable contribution towards our shared goal of stability and peace.
4. Unfortunately, the humanitarian situation in Europe has deteriorated immensely since the last address by Ms. Spoljaric-Egger's predecessor to the Permanent Council. Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine continues to have devastating consequences for the civilian population, particularly, but not only, in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine. Due to Russia's relentless indiscriminate attacks on civilians and civilian infrastructure, millions of people lack access to essential services

and goods, including water, electricity, heating, medication and food, facing severe hardship especially in the winter season.

5. To provide emergency assistance to Ukraine, the European Union is coordinating its largest ever operation under the EU Civil Protection Mechanism. Since the start of Russia's full-scale invasion, the EU and its member states have been the biggest donor of humanitarian aid to Ukraine, including via the ICRC, with €1.4 billion in humanitarian aid coming directly from the European Commission.
6. The European Union commends the ICRC for its indispensable efforts in providing emergency assistance such as food, water and other essential items, supporting hospitals and primary health-care facilities with medical equipment and preparedness measures, repairing water stations and helping households rebuild damaged homes, and reconnecting families who have been separated. ICRC's support to front-line communities is essential and we pay tribute to the ICRC aid workers who risk their lives daily. We notably condemn the tragic killing of ICRC workers in a Russian double-tap attack in September 2024 while delivering life-saving humanitarian assistance to vulnerable communities.
7. The EU reiterates that the ICRC must be able to fulfil its mandate and therefore calls upon the Russian Federation to grant it access to Russian territory, the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine and all detainees, so as to enable vital humanitarian assistance and independent monitoring of compliance with international humanitarian law. Alarmed by the deteriorating humanitarian situation in temporarily occupied Oleshky, where residents face severe shortages of food, water, and medicine, we call for an immediate localised ceasefire and unhindered humanitarian access. We further condemn in the strongest terms the systematic torture, ill-treatment and killing of Ukrainian prisoners of war and civilian detainees, as documented in numerous reports by ODIHR and by independent experts mandated under the OSCE Moscow Mechanism, and stresses the urgent need to ensure accountability for these serious violations of international humanitarian law. We also recall that Russia must comply with the OSCE code of conduct of politico-military aspects of security.
8. In conclusion, we reiterate our gratitude to the ICRC President and to her staff who often carry out their duty in dangerous circumstances. We wish you, Ms. Spoljaric-Egger, every success in carrying out your important humanitarian mission.

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