



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Permanent Council No. 1580 Vienna, 8 October 2026

EU Statement on the Report by the Head of the OSCE Centre in Ashgabat, William Leaf

1. The European Union welcomes the Head of the OSCE Centre in Ashgabat, Ambassador William Leaf, to the Permanent Council. We thank him and his dedicated team for their excellent work and look forward to continuing the good cooperation.
2. We welcome the Centre's valuable support to Turkmenistan in implementing its OSCE commitments across all three dimensions of security and in advancing its reform agenda. We commend the Centre's close engagement, coordination and cooperation with national and international stakeholders in preparation of the programmatic activities for the upcoming period. The long-standing and steady engagement between OSCE and Turkmenistan was further showcased by the visits of OSCE Secretary General Feridun Sinirlioğlu in December 2025, and OSCE Chairperson-in-Office Ignazio Cassis in August 2026.
3. Turkmenistan remains an important partner in deepening the EU-Central Asia strategic partnership, building on the *Joint Roadmap for Deepening Ties between the EU and Central Asia* of October 2023 and the first EU-Central Asia Summit, held in April 2025.
4. In the politico-military dimension, we underline the Centre's substantive work, including with the financial support of several EU Member States, in promoting confidence- and security-building measures, strengthening the capacities of law enforcement and border management institutions, supporting efforts to combat cybercrime and violent extremism, and enhancing the protection of critical infrastructure. We also appreciate co-operation and synergies between the Centre and broader security-related international initiatives in Central Asia.

5. In the economic and environmental dimension, we welcome the Centre's continued focus on supporting Turkmenistan's national efforts to promote good economic governance and financial integrity, combat corruption, and further develop climate- and energy-related legislation and policy frameworks. We note the importance of efforts to reduce methane emissions in Turkmenistan. We also commend the Centre's work on connectivity and transport, which contributes to broader efforts to strengthen transport, energy and digital links between the European Union and Central Asia.
6. In the human dimension, we commend the Centre's valuable work in combating trafficking in human beings, preventing gender-based and domestic violence, supporting criminal justice reform, and strengthening media development and media literacy. These activities remain highly relevant, in view of addressing shortcomings in the protection and promotion of human rights and fundamental freedoms in Turkmenistan. In this regard, we strongly encourage the release of persons imprisoned for exercising their rights to freedom of expression and association, including human rights defenders Mr. Murad Dushemov and Mr. Mansur Mingelov. Further, the EU calls for full implementation of the recommendations of the UN Committee Against Torture from May 2025, including the follow-up procedure on provision of information on all persons disappeared in prison and encourages closer and structured cooperation with civil society on the issue of enforced disappearances. Finally, we underline the importance that the EU attaches to the elimination of forced labour and encourage further Turkmen efforts to this end. The EU stands ready to continue supporting efforts to improve the human rights situation in all areas.
7. The EU welcomes that advancing gender equality and gender mainstreaming remain high on the Centre's agenda, including through its support for Turkmenistan's first National Action Plan on *Women, Peace and Security*.
8. In conclusion, we wish Ambassador Leaf and his team every success in carrying out their mandate.

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