



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Permanent Council 1408 Vienna, 26 January 2023

EU Statement in response to the address by the President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, Ms. Margareta Cederfelt

1. The European Union warmly welcomes back to the Permanent Council Ms. Margareta Cederfelt, President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly.
2. The established practice of inviting the President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly to address the Permanent Council contributes to strengthening our close cooperation, as well as the complementarity of our respective work. We follow with interest and appreciation the manifold activities of the parliamentary side of our Organisation, notably with regard to Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine.
3. The year that has just begun looks to be as challenging as 2022. Our Organisation is in good hands. As you rightly pointed out at the Ministerial Council in Łódź, North Macedonia, as host to a field operation, is ideally equipped to understand the true value of the OSCE. Foreign Minister Osmani has outlined before this Council a principle-based leadership of the Organisation. He can count on the full support of the European Union.
4. At the upcoming Winter Meeting of the Parliamentary Assembly, it will be exactly one year since Russia began waging its full-scale war of aggression against Ukraine. We appreciate that the war against Ukraine will feature prominently in the discussions of the Winter Meeting and we will follow with attention the special debate the Parliamentary Assembly will have on the war. In this context, we welcome your timely decision to appoint a Special Representative for Parliamentary Dialogue on Ukraine.

5. Russia's ongoing unprovoked, unjustified and illegal war of aggression against Ukraine, with Belarus' complicity, is a threat to European and global security and stability, and an enormous human tragedy. We once again condemn Russia, as well as its accomplice Belarus, for its shameful war of aggression. We underline Russia's full responsibility and accountability for all its reprehensible acts.
6. We thank you for providing a comprehensive overview of the work plan of the Parliamentary Assembly for the year ahead, including in the second dimension on topical issues like climate change and energy security. It is substantive and wide ranging. We share the strong focus on Ukraine which, as also stated by the CiO Foreign Minister Osmani, will remain our top priority.
7. We also share the view that other regions and thematic issues deserve attention, including the multiple challenges faced by the Central Asian participating States as a result of the situation in Afghanistan. People suffering from the consequences of conflicts and violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms deserve our sustained attention.
8. There are still unresolved conflicts in the OSCE region. The European Union reiterates its unwavering support and commitment to the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Moldova and Georgia within their internationally recognised borders, and remains fully committed to facilitate efforts to secure sustainable peace and stability in the whole South Caucasus.
9. The political repression by the Lukashenka regime has reached an unprecedented level. There are now more than 1,440 political prisoners. The EU condemns this brutal repression and the politically motivated trials aimed at silencing any independent voices and closing all remaining space for democratic debate. The European Union will continue to support all the brave women and men striving for a free, democratic and independent Belarus.
10. Lasting security cannot be sustained without respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, democracy, and the rule of law. The OSCE autonomous

institutions – ODIHR, HCNM and RFOM – executive structures and field operations deserve our steadfast support. It is the responsibility of all of us to preserve their strong mandates and ensure their proper functioning. We applaud the field missions that have continued to deliver and assist the participating States. In this regard, we share your concern about the limited extension of the mandate of the OSCE mission to Moldova.

11. We welcome the continued efforts by the Parliamentary Assembly to participate in election observation activities. Election observation is a valuable tool for the promotion of democratisation and respect for human rights across our region. We reaffirm our full support for the ODIHR election observation methodology and welcome the independent, impartial and professional manner in which it is implemented by the Parliamentary Assembly in partnership with ODIHR.

12. The work of the Parliamentary Assembly and the governmental side of our Organisation is predicated on the common aim of strengthening the Organisation and the jointly agreed principles and commitments that underpin it. Parliamentarians have an important role to play in advocating for the OSCE, its principles and commitments towards governments and the public. Members of Parliaments contribute to strengthen cooperation and synergies, and the work of special representatives, ad hoc committees and working groups is particularly relevant. We appreciate that many parliamentarians from EU Member States are actively engaged in this important work. We appreciate that the Parliamentary Assembly continues to support the OSCE and we continue to follow with interest the work of the “Call for Action/Helsinki +50” initiative.

13. As you stated in Łódź: “Now is the time to support the OSCE, to fully support the OSCE”. The European Union seconds your plea. We thank you for your leadership over the past year and a half, and we look forward to continuing our cooperation with a view to the Annual Session in Vancouver.

The Candidate Countries NORTH MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO*, ALBANIA*, UKRAINE, and the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA, the Potential Candidate Country GEORGIA, and the

EFTA countries ICELAND, LIECHTENSTEIN and NORWAY, members of the European Economic Area, as well as ANDORRA and SAN MARINO align themselves with this statement.

* North Macedonia, Montenegro and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.