



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Permanent Council No. 1218 Vienna, 28 February 2019

EU Statement in Response to the Head of the OSCE Mission to Montenegro, H.E. Ambassador Maryse Daviet

The European Union warmly welcomes Ambassador Maryse Daviet, Head of the OSCE Mission to Montenegro to the Permanent Council and thanks her for the report on the Mission's activities over the past year. We also appreciate the timely distribution of your report.

We note that the Mission continued with the implementation of its refocused programme that is aligned with the national priorities and provides specific added value with a strategic impact. In this regard we welcome tailoring programmes in three key priority areas: Democratization, Media, and Security Co-operation and Governance.

We also welcome that the Mission strengthened programmatic co-ordination with international partners, also to ensure complementarity and avoid duplication of work.

In connection to the ODIHR election observation findings after the presidential elections on 15 April last year, we commend the Mission's continued support to the State Election Commission in their efforts to implement recommendations. We also welcome the constitution of the parliamentary "Committee for Further Electoral Reform and other Legislation" with a mandate to implement ODIHR recommendations. We continue to encourage all sides of the political spectrum to continue with political dialogue in the Parliament and to deliver on the much needed reform of the electoral framework.

We commend the Mission's work with the Parliament, especially efforts to increase the capacity of the staff and of selected committees, particularly in relation to their oversight role, as well as to enhance good governance. We also welcome the

Mission's support in implementation of the Action Plan for a more gender sensitive Parliament, including through workshops on gender mainstreaming.

We are pleased that efforts to mainstream gender are present both within the Mission as well as on the ground. We welcome the Mission's extending support to capacity building of network of local gender focal points and in developing municipal Gender Action Plans to implement key objectives of the National Gender Action Plan, including by training journalists on promoting gender equality. We would like to encourage the Mission to enhance activities in prevention and fighting gender-based violence, also in light of the decision on prevention Violence against Women adopted at the Ministerial Council in Milano last year.

In Milano OSCE participating States reached consensus on another important decision - on safety of journalists. We join the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media in commending the arrest of suspects of the attack on journalist Olivera Lakić on 8 May last year. Attacks against journalists highlight the need for the authorities to guarantee a safe climate, conducive to freedom of expression and independence of the media. It is therefore of utmost importance that the Mission continues with the "Safety of Journalists" campaign, as well as supporting media institutions and development of professional media and promoting media freedom and pluralism.

We also appreciate the work of the Mission's Security co-operation and Governance department, especially on combating illicit cross-border trafficking in cultural property, advanced passenger information (API) system, countering violent extremism and radicalization that leads to terrorism, as well as fighting trafficking in human beings, hate crimes and SALW and SCA control. In the framework of implementation of UNSCR 1325, we particularly welcome cooperation in gender mainstreaming and supporting women's leadership within the police, where the Mission championed the newly founded Association of Women Police Officers, mandated to encourage women leadership, challenge stereotypes and cultural barriers impeding women from joining the security sector.

Capacity building and raising awareness of various local authorities is of utmost importance in the efforts to achieve an inclusive and safe society. In this regard, the EU supports the Mission's promotion of youth engagement in regional, as well as

national activities and its support to the Regional Youth Co-operation Office (RYCO) in Montenegro.

We also underline the necessity of regional cooperation and commend Montenegro in its constructive approach in fostering dialogue and supporting security cooperation in the region.

We are pleased that Montenegro is advancing in the EU accession negotiations and welcome the increasing number of open chapters, where out of a total of 35 negotiation chapters, 32 have now been opened, the last one in December on environment, and 3 chapters have already been provisionally closed. We recall that progress on the rule of law and fundamental rights chapters will continue to determine the pace of accession negotiations overall.

We note that there is continuous progress in legislative reform and institution building, and urge Montenegro to further step up the fight against high-level corruption and organised crime, money laundering and temporary seizures of assets. In this context, we stand ready to continue providing guidance and assistance.

Finally, we thank you, Ambassador, for your presentation and wish you and your team success in your work in the coming year.

The Candidate Countries NORTH MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO*, SERBIA* and ALBANIA*, the Country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and Potential Candidate BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA, and the EFTA countries ICELAND and LIECHTENSTEIN, members of the European Economic Area, as well as UKRAINE, GEORGIA, ANDORRA and SAN MARINO align themselves with this statement.

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