



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Permanent Council No. 1507 Vienna, 6 February 2025

EU Statement in response to the Address by the Chair of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe

1. The European Union warmly welcomes to the Permanent Council the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade of Luxembourg, H.E. Mr. Xavier Bettel.
2. We strongly support the programme of the Luxembourg Presidency of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, aligning with the strategic priorities adopted at the Reykjavík Summit. In particular, the EU welcomes Luxembourg's priority of consolidating the three essential and intrinsically linked pillars of the Council of Europe—namely human rights, democracy, and the rule of law—as well as its steadfast commitment to Ukraine.
3. The EU highly appreciates Luxembourg's focus on promoting accountability for the crimes committed in the context of Russia's illegal, unprovoked, and unjustifiable war of aggression against Ukraine, and remains at the forefront of advancing all measures within the OSCE and the Council of Europe to ensure accountability for all violations of international law.
4. As we approach the three-year mark of Russia's large-scale illegal, unprovoked, and unjustifiable war of aggression, the EU once again condemns Russia's daily blatant violations of the fundamental principles of the Council of Europe's Statute, OSCE principles and commitments, and international law, including the UN Charter, in the strongest possible terms.
5. There can and will be no impunity for the crime of aggression, war crimes, crimes against humanity, and other violations of international law committed in the context

of Russia's war of aggression. All those responsible must and will be held accountable.

6. We further welcome the Council of Europe's efforts to combat impunity. These include the creation of the Register of Damage Caused by the Aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine and the ongoing provision of legal and policy advice to Ukraine, and the training of investigation experts, and professionals working with victims of violence through the dedicated Ukraine Action Plan "Resilience, Recovery, and Reconstruction." The EU will continue to cooperate with the CoE in establishing the Special Tribunal for the crime of aggression against Ukraine, ensuring that evidence collected by the International Centre for the Prosecution of the Crime of Aggression can be transferred to and used before the Tribunal. As a fully-fledged Participant in the Register of Damage for Ukraine, the EU will also continue to work with the CoE to establish an international comprehensive compensation mechanism.
7. The systematic, state-sponsored, and further intensifying repression within Russia's own borders illustrates the country's blatant disregard for human rights. In this regard, the EU reiterates that, despite the fact that Russia ceased to be a party to the European Convention on Human Rights in September 2022, Russia remains obliged to execute the judgments of the European Court of Human Rights related to violations that occurred before that date.
8. This year, we will also mark the 75th anniversary of the European Convention on Human Rights. Adopted in Rome in November 1950, the Convention remains at the core of the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms at a time when we see democratic backsliding and rising authoritarianism across our regions. The rights therein such as the rights to freedom of thought, conscience and religion, expression, and peaceful assembly and association, as well as the right to a fair trial, are under pressure in a number of participating States, highlighting the continued significance of the Convention in protecting rights and freedoms where justice falls short at the national level. We encourage joint efforts to strengthen all aspects of democracy and democratic institutions in our member states. We also mark the 35th anniversary of the Venice Commission this year, which has established

itself as a guardian of constitutional integrity in Europe, as also confirmed by the Reykjavík Declaration.

9. We note the concerns expressed by the CoE Commissioner for Human Rights regarding the developments in Georgia and echo the RFoM's call for Georgia to immediately and unconditionally release all journalists who have been arbitrarily arrested or detained. In this context, we would be interested in hearing your assessment of the cooperation between the Council of Europe and Georgia, as well as the consequences of the withdrawal of the Georgian parliamentary delegation from PACE.
10. As we continue to believe in the strong complementarity between the work of the OSCE and the Council of Europe, we welcome and reiterate our support for dialogue and cooperation between both organisations, already established in the fight against terrorism, combatting trafficking in human beings, the promotion of tolerance and non-discrimination, and the protection of the rights of persons belonging to national minorities.
11. As democratic institutions and human rights and fundamental freedoms face numerous challenges across the European continent, and as the Russian Federation unabatedly continues its war of aggression against Ukraine, the EU would like to highlight the potential for further expansion of cooperation between the OSCE and the Council of Europe to ensure accountability, the rule of law, media freedom, and the safeguarding of democratic institutions and a free civil society.
12. In addition, the EU priorities for cooperation with the Council of Europe in 2025–2026 underscore the EU's commitment to further strengthening its strategic partnership with the Council as a key institutional partner in political, legal, and financial terms.
13. In conclusion, the EU looks forward to continued close cooperation between the OSCE and the Council of Europe, and we wish you, Minister Bettel, every success during your Presidency. The EU also takes this opportunity to thank Lithuania as the previous Chair and looks forward to Malta as the incoming Chair of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe.

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