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OSCE Permanent Council No. 1336 Vienna, 23 September 2021

EU statement in response to the report by the Director of the Conflict Prevention Centre

FINAL (974 words)

1. The European Union would like to welcome Ambassador Tuula Yrjölä to the Permanent Council and thank her for her report on the activities of the Conflict Prevention Centre (CPC).
2. The events of the past year have clearly demonstrated the need for the OSCE to remain actively engaged in the prevention of, and response to, emerging crises. This is why the instruments in the OSCE conflict prevention and conflict management toolbox are of utmost importance. However, we have also seen that the Organisation can only be as effective as the participating States' political will allows it to be. Fostering dialogue and confidence-building are thus essential to enable the OSCE to continue to play a central role in European security.
3. This year we mark the 10th anniversary of the Vilnius Ministerial Council Decision No. 3/11 on the Conflict Cycle, underpinning our commitment to strengthen the capabilities in early warning, early action, dialogue facilitation, mediation support and post-conflict rehabilitation across all three dimensions. We see opportunities for the CPC to enhance the OSCE abilities in the field of early warning and crises prevention. We are therefore looking forward to discussing the proposed ministerial decision in this regard with a view to giving new political impetus to one of the OSCE's core functions.
4. We commend the CPC for its ongoing support to the OSCE's engagement in Ukraine, and in particular with regard to the conflict which has now lasted over seven years due to the continuing Russian acts of aggression against Ukraine. Our



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concerns about the restrictions faced by the SMM on their freedom of movement are very well known, and we are particularly concerned about the areas adjacent to the Ukraine-Russia State border temporarily outside the control of the Ukrainian government. With the closure of the Border Observation Mission, it is even more important that SMM should have safe, secure, unconditional and unimpeded access to the entire territory of Ukraine, including the border areas, in accordance with its mandate. We believe that the full potential of the OSCE should be used and encourage the CPC to strengthen cooperation, flow of information, and synergies between OSCE structures, as well as, where appropriate, between OSCE and other international actors, active in Ukraine.

5. Reaching a lasting solution to the conflicts in the Republic of Moldova and in Georgia, remains a priority for the EU. The EU also reiterates its full support for the mediation format of the Minsk Group and its Co-Chairs to reach a comprehensive and lasting final settlement. We value the CPC's contribution to the resolution of the unresolved conflicts, particularly the support provided to the Special Representatives. The EU reiterates its strong support for the existing negotiation formats.
6. The EU takes note of the work carried out by the CPC to support the OSCE field operations, especially during the challenging period posed by the Covid-19 pandemic. We encourage the CPC to support the SMM more actively during this pandemic, by coordinating advice and expertise with the Secretariat, in particular on security, duty of care and procurement. We continue to believe that the field operations should have strong and flexible mandates, as their work with and across host countries and with civil society is of great importance in addressing tensions through early warning, peace building, conflict prevention and mediation.
7. Ambassador Yrjölä, we welcome the virtual meeting for heads of field operations in Central Asia which you hosted on security challenges in Afghanistan and implications for our engagement in the region and encourage the CPC to organise



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more similar events in the future. We would also appreciate if you could further elaborate on how the CPC plans to deal with this issue and its security implications well beyond Central Asia.

8. The EU has a high level of ambition regarding peace mediation as a key tool of conflict prevention and resolution and peacebuilding. This level of ambition is reflected in the EU Council Conclusions on EU Peace Mediation, which were adopted in December 2020.
9. We reiterate our strong commitment to the full implementation of the existing principles and commitments in the politico-military dimension. We strongly support the modernisation of the Vienna Document, in order to increase military stability, transparency and predictability in the OSCE area. We are convinced that this would bring more long-term security for all participating States. We support the activities connected to SALW. We highly value the Structured Dialogue as a transparent, inclusive, state-owned, state-driven and confidence-building process, without a predetermined outcome and of high relevance for the EU. We thank the CPC for its continued support to the Forum for Security Co-operation.
10. The EU considers the implementation of the 2004 OSCE Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality and of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 and related Resolutions as highly important. We therefore appreciate your commitment to gender mainstreaming, to promoting the role of women in the security sector, and their full, equal, meaningful and effective inclusion and participation in peace processes, and we welcome the activities of the CPC to advance these aims.
11. We recognize the importance that youth can play in the promotion of security in the OSCE area, including through regional cooperation and support the engagement of the field missions with RYCO in the Western Balkans.
12. The CPC, the autonomous institutions and field missions must be provided through the Unified Budget with the resources necessary to carry out their mandate



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effectively and efficiently. We agree with you, Ambassador Yrjölä, that we have a shared political and financial responsibility for collective security and for the OSCE's comprehensive conflict cycle toolbox.

13. Madam Chairperson, we would like to thank the CPC for their valuable work, especially under the current challenging conditions. We continue to fully support the CPC and wish Ambassador Yrjölä and her dedicated staff every success in their future activities.

The Candidate Countries REPUBLIC of NORTH MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO* and ALBANIA*, the EFTA countries ICELAND and LIECHTENSTEIN, members of the European Economic Area, as well as the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA, GEORGIA, ANDORRA and SAN MARINO align themselves with this statement.

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