



EUROPEAN UNION

**OSCE Permanent Council No. 1487
Vienna, 5 September 2024**

**EU Statement in Response to the Address by the President of
the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, Ms Pia Kauma**

1. The European Union warmly welcomes Ms Pia Kauma, President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, back to the Permanent Council. The established practice of inviting the President of the OSCE PA to address the Permanent Council contributes to strengthening our close cooperation.
2. First of all, we wish to congratulate you on your uncontested re-election at the Bucharest annual session as President of the PA for a second year. The leadership of the PA is in good hands. We also congratulate Mr. Roberto Montella, who was confirmed as Secretary General on the same occasion.
3. The recent annual session in Bucharest focused attention on key issues for the security of our region, first and foremost Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine. The war in Gaza was also discussed, reflecting the recognition of the Helsinki Final Act that security in Europe is closely linked with security in the Mediterranean area as a whole.
4. In your opening address in Bucharest, you recalled that for over a decade, the PA has stood resolutely with Ukraine in the face of Russian aggression. This was confirmed in the resolutions adopted on Ukraine, condemning the war and expressing support for Ukraine. The Parliamentary Support Team to Ukraine is a political and tangible expression of this commitment. The EU shares the positions of the PA. We

condemn the aggression in the strongest possible terms and demand that Russia completely and unconditionally withdraw all its forces and military equipment from the entire territory of Ukraine within its internationally recognised borders, and respect Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity. The European Council has recently reconfirmed our unwavering commitment to providing continued multifaceted support to Ukraine and its people for as long as it takes and as intensely as needed, based on Ukraine's urgent needs.

5. We welcome the particular attention this session has paid to the multiple and multifaceted consequences of the war, including those felt beyond Ukraine's borders. The Republic of Moldova is one of the neighbouring countries most affected by Russia's war of aggression and its additional destabilising hybrid actions. We also need to remain vigilant and closely monitor the human rights situation in the Transnistrian region of the Republic of Moldova, as highlighted in one of the Resolutions agreed in Bucharest.
6. The increasing shrinking space for civil society, human rights defenders, independent journalists, and critical voices, as well as the challenges posed by climate change, were also addressed at the annual session, and these issues require our continuous attention.
7. Issues related to the functionality of the OSCE were discussed in Bucharest as well. We echo the appreciation and support you expressed for the Maltese Chair's leadership in seeking solutions on the new top four positions. The EU will continue to support the Maltese Chairpersonship in reaching consensus without delay.

Madam President,

8. Conflicts linger unresolved in our region and appropriate attention should be devoted to them. The EU reiterates its unwavering support and commitment to the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Moldova and Georgia within their internationally recognised borders. The EU reaffirms its support for the sovereignty,

inviolability of borders and territorial integrity of Armenia and Azerbaijan and remains fully committed to facilitating efforts to advance a comprehensive, just, sustainable, and lasting peace in the interest of all populations in the South Caucasus.

9. Other regions and thematic issues deserve our attention, as highlighted by the work of the ad hoc committees and special representatives throughout the year and the breadth of the resolutions adopted at the annual session in Bucharest. A case in point is the emerging issue of Artificial Intelligence, with the resolution adopted on “Artificial Intelligence and the fight against terrorism” and the appointment of the first Special Representative on AI.
10. Four years after the fraudulent 2020 presidential election and the appalling human rights crackdown in Belarus, the EU stands in solidarity with the people of Belarus who, despite continued repression by the Lukashenka regime, have peacefully and courageously pressed for democratic change, respect for human rights, and the release of all political prisoners. We call on the Belarusian authorities to immediately and unconditionally release the almost 1,400 political prisoners held in Belarusian prisons. In addition to wide scale domestic repression, we condemn the Belarusian regime’s complicity in Russia’s illegal war of aggression against Ukraine.
11. We appreciate the Parliamentary Assembly’s continued participation in election observation activities, which showcases the synergies between the parliamentary and the governmental sides of the Organisation. Election observation contributes to promoting democracy and respect for human rights across our region. We reaffirm our full support for the ODIHR election observation methodology and commend the independent, impartial, and professional manner in which it is implemented by the Parliamentary Assembly in partnership with ODIHR.

Madam President,

12. We agree with your assessment that security is not just about the absence of armed conflict and that it requires economic stability, a safe and sustainable environment,

and that it hinges on human rights, democracy and the rule of law. Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, supported by Belarus, shows that human rights and fundamental freedoms are primary targets of aggressors. Their external aggression is accompanied by escalating internal repression, as documented in reports by independent international and regional human rights mechanisms, including those within the OSCE. The OSCE autonomous institutions – ODIHR, RFoM, and HCNM – deserve our steadfast support. Our common commitments make us responsible for preserving their strong mandates and ensuring their proper functioning and funding.

13. The Parliamentary Assembly and the governmental side of our Organisation share the common aim of strengthening the OSCE and upholding the commonly agreed principles and the commitments that underpin it. As we approach the 50th anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act next year, we should redouble our efforts to ensure the functionality and effectiveness of our Organisation, with the aim of strengthening the resilience and enhancing the security of our region.

14. We appreciate that MPs continue to advocate for the OSCE in their respective countries. MPs engaged as special representatives, in ad hoc committees and working groups contribute to addressing both regional and thematic issues. Many MPs from EU Member States are actively engaged in this important work.

15. As we continue to closely follow the work of the Parliamentary Assembly, we wish you all the very best for the continuation of your principled leadership of the OSCE PA.

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

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