



**EUROPEAN UNION**

**OSCE Permanent Council N° 1202  
Vienna, 15 November 2018**

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**EU Statement in response to the report by Amb. Vuk Žugić,  
Coordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental  
Activities**

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We warmly welcome you, Ambassador Žugić, to the Permanent Council and thank you for your report. Your remarks have very well illustrated the relevance of economic and environmental issues for the security of our countries and citizens. We therefore support strong OSCE engagement in the Economic and Environmental Dimension where good economic and environmental governance, combatting corruption, connectivity, sustainable energy and other issues related to sustainable development are priorities for us. We are in favour of efforts to align OSCE activities with the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development.

Exploiting synergies, joining efforts and coordinating activities among OSCE structures and with other international organisations is key in order to work efficiently and stay relevant. We appreciate the efforts of your office to this end. The recent "Regional Seminar for local practitioners on preventing corruption at local level", organised jointly with the OECD was a good example. Against the backdrop of the recent Asian and Mediterranean conferences we would be interested to hear to what extent OSCE partners for cooperation are involved in your office's activities.

You highlighted digitalisation as a phenomenon that deserves increased attention by the OSCE. We have indeed dedicated a lot of work to this topic this year, which has confirmed that this cross-cutting issue has wide implications for security. We see merit in continuing to

discuss the impact of digitalisation on all aspects of the second dimension as well as studying potential areas on which the OSCE could support its participating States in addressing the security risks brought about by the digital transformation.

Concerning your proposal to create a dedicated informal platform to deal with this topic we would ask you to elaborate more on what should, in your view, be the purpose and desired outcome of such a new platform and what this additional focus and workload for your office would mean for other priority areas of your work, including in terms of limited resources.

We appreciate the focus you put in your report on environmental aspects of security. Many pressing issues such as environmental degradation and disasters, climate change, water crises, environmental consequences of crisis situations and conflicts, as well as crimes related to the environment deserve global attention. While these issues are potential sources of conflict and insecurity, they can also represent opportunities for cooperation and confidence building, and we highly value the contribution your office makes to addressing them. In this context let me reiterate our support for the ENVSEC initiative and the Aarhus Centres.

On the energy portfolio we attach particular importance to strengthening the resilience of critical energy networks, increasing energy efficiency and renewable energy as an effective means to enhance energy security in participating States. We look forward to intensifying our discussions on energy related topics under the incoming Slovak chairmanship – which we have already kick-started in Malaga.

As we progress in the preparations for the Milano Ministerial Council we would like to assure you of our strong commitment to work constructively towards the adoption of substantive deliverables in the 2<sup>nd</sup> dimension. Together with the Italian chairmanship you have done

important work in supporting and informing our preparatory work throughout the year.

In conclusion, we thank you and your team for your valuable work and wish you every success.

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

\* The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.