



EUROPEAN UNION

**OSCE Permanent Council N°1161
Vienna, 19 October 2017**

**EU Statement in Response to the Presentations by the
Chairs of the Three Committees**

The European Union and its Member States thank the Chairs of the three Committees for their presentations.

Let me start with the first Dimension. We welcome the way in which Ambassador Kongstad has taken forward discussions in the Security Committee on transnational threats over the past months. Ambassador, you have invited a wide range of interlocutors including from across the OSCE, the Field Missions and participating States to share best practice on preventing and countering violent extremism and radicalisation that lead to terrorism (VERLT) with a special focus on youth and gender, as well as cyber/ICT security, security sector and governance reform (SSG/R) and community and intelligence-lead policing. As a Chair, you have promoted an operational and cross-dimensional focus and human rights and gender have been an integral part of the exchanges.

The Joint Committee Meetings on the issues of Trafficking in Human Beings and on Women, Peace and Security that highlighted the need for cross-dimensional and comprehensive approach were highly appreciated and added considerable value. We would support the continuation of the valuable established practice of voluntary reporting by participating States in the Security Committee.

We hope that our work on the implementation of the Cyber/ICT CBMs in the Informal Working Group Established by PC Decision 1309 will continue in a constructive atmosphere.

Finally, in our view, the draft initiatives tabled by the OSCE Chairmanship cover Security Committee and Chairmanship in Office priorities and we stand ready to engage so that our Ministers can endorse robust texts and tangible deliverables on these issues as part of the overall outcome of the Ministerial Council in Vienna.

On the second Dimension, we commend Ambassador Sarybay for his able chairing of the Economic and Environmental Committee. The discussions in the Committee this year have covered a range of interesting topics both in the economic and environmental fields.

We welcome the substantial discussions held during this year's Economic and Environmental Forum cycle and in the 2017 Economic and Environmental Implementation Meeting, dedicated to various aspects of Greening the Economy and Building Partnerships for Security in the OSCE Region.

We welcome the intention of the Chairmanship to further deepen our commitments in both the Economic and the Environmental spheres with the tabling of draft Ministerial Council decisions on economic participation and greening our economies and fostering environmental cooperation. Both areas are highly important for the EU and reflect the ability of the OSCE to contribute to security and stability in our region through activities in the 2nd dimension. They also bear potential for enhanced common efforts within the OSCE area. We believe that agreeing on Ministerial Council Decisions in the two proposed areas would also better equip the OSCE to contribute to the implementation of security related aspects of international commitments such as the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change.

Last but not least, the Human Dimension: The European Union wishes to express its gratitude to Ambassador MacLeod for her dedicated chairmanship of the Human Dimension Committee.

We commend the inclusive and interactive approach you have given to the Human Dimension Committee meetings, which has contributed to the involvement of a broad range of stakeholders and to more engaging

discussions. We also appreciate the practise of providing concept papers and how you engaged all delegations.

We welcome your focus on fundamental freedoms such as freedom of expression, association and assembly, religion or belief, as well as torture prevention and gender; we also appreciated that you provided space for discussing further issues of concern.

We commend the continuation of the practice of voluntary reporting in the Human Dimension Committee. We thank the participating States that presented such reports in order to share best practices and we continue to encourage others to make use of this practice in the next year.

The Committee makes an important contribution in following up on human dimension discussions in the Permanent Council and at annual Human Dimension events, such as HDIM. The Human Dimension should remain at the forefront of our work and we trust the work done in the Committee will be reflected in significant Decisions adopted at the Vienna Ministerial Council, thus contributing to strengthening our commitments. In this context, we welcome the focus on fundamental freedoms.

The European Union appreciates the continued thematic and operational approach to the discussions in the three Committees. We reiterate our view that we welcome the engagement of OSCE autonomous Institutions, OSCE field operations, the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly and, not least civil society including NGOs in further enriching discussions in the Committees. Also, integrating a gender perspective in the work of all three Committees is an important way to enhance the work of our organisation.

In concluding, I wish to express the full support of the European Union and its Member States to the important work of Ambassadors Kongstad, Sarybay, and MacLeod. We wish them every success in their future endeavours.

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 country LIECHTENSTEIN, member 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.