



## EUROPEAN UNION

### **OSCE Permanent Council No. 1460 Vienna, 8 February 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 back to the Permanent Council Ms Pia Kauma, President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly. The established practice of inviting the President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly to address the Permanent Council contributes to strengthening our close cooperation.
2. Since you addressed the Permanent Council for the first time last September, Russia has continued to wage its unprovoked, unjustifiable and illegal war of aggression against Ukraine, causing unspeakable suffering for the people in Ukraine and negatively impacting the whole OSCE area and beyond.
3. In laying out his priorities before this Council, Malta's Foreign Minister, Dr. Ian Borg, indicated as an overarching priority the unequivocal commitment to keeping Russia's illegal war of aggression against Ukraine at the top of the OSCE agenda. We strongly agree with this and we welcome that his first visit as CiO was to Ukraine this past week. We also welcome your recent trip to Kyiv together with the PA's Parliamentary Support Team for Ukraine, reaffirming the PA's support for Ukraine and engaging directly with members of the Verkhovna Rada.
4. The EU reiterates its resolute condemnation of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, which constitutes a manifest violation of the UN Charter, and reaffirms its unwavering support for Ukraine's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognised borders and its inherent right of self-defence

against the Russian aggression. We condemn the continued military support for Russia's war of aggression provided by Belarus, Iran, and the DPRK.

5. We confirm our unwavering commitment to continue to provide strong political, financial, economic, humanitarian, military and diplomatic support to Ukraine and its people for as long as it takes. At the meeting of the European Council on 1 February, our leaders agreed to ensure stable, predictable and sustainable financial support for Ukraine for the period 2024-2027 by setting up a Ukraine Facility worth up to 50 billion Euros. This will contribute to the recovery, reconstruction and modernisation of the country and foster social cohesion and progressive integration into the Union, with a view to possible future Union membership
6. CiO Minister Borg presented another overarching priority: ensuring the OSCE's functionality and finding solutions for its leadership. We strongly agree on this as well, and reaffirm our strong support for the OSCE Secretary General and the Heads of the autonomous institutions. Moreover, as the CiO stated, we should now move onward: it is our common responsibility to preserve the effectiveness of the Organisation and maintain its ability to act. We must adopt a unified budget to secure a sustainable, predictable and resilient future for our Organisation.
7. Madam President, unresolved conflicts persist in the OSCE 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 facilitate efforts to advance a comprehensive, just, sustainable and lasting peace in the interest of all populations in the whole South Caucasus.
8. PA activities confirm that other regions and thematic issues deserve consideration, including the multiple challenges faced by the Central Asian participating States as a result of the situation in Afghanistan. The people who endure the consequences of

conflicts and violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms deserve our sustained attention.

9. We appreciate the Parliamentary Assembly's continued participation in election observation activities, which showcases the synergies within the Organisation. Election observation is a valuable tool for promoting democratisation 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.
10. In Belarus, the Lukashenka regime continues its deplorable tactics of intimidation and brutal repression against its critics and potential political opponents ahead of the so-called "elections" in February. We echo the profound concerns expressed by ODIHR Director and by you for the decision not to invite OSCE/ODIHR to observe Belarus' parliamentary elections. It is contrary to the OSCE commitments made by Belarus and goes against the best interest of the Belarusian people.
11. Russia has also regrettably decided not to invite OSCE observers at its upcoming presidential elections in March. We agree with the ODIHR Director's statement that this decision runs contrary to the OSCE commitments made by Russia, as well as your assessment that conditions in Russia have deteriorated so much, and democratic backsliding has reached such a critical point, that the PA cannot deploy observers.
12. Lasting security cannot be sustained without respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, democracy, and the rule of law. The OSCE autonomous institutions – ODIHR, RFoM and HCNM – deserve our steadfast support. It is the responsibility of all of us to preserve their strong mandates and ensure their proper functioning.
13. The work of the Parliamentary Assembly and the governmental side of our Organisation have the common aim of strengthening the OSCE and upholding jointly

agreed principles and commitments that underpin it. Parliamentarians have an important role to play in advocating for the OSCE, its principles and commitments to governments and the public. Members of parliaments contribute to strengthening cooperation and synergies, and the work of special representatives, ad hoc committees and working groups is particularly relevant in addressing both regional and thematic issues. Many members of parliaments from EU Member States are actively engaged in this important work.

14. We understand that you have initiated a new process to assess the future work of the PA and we would be interested in learning more about the plans for advancing this initiative.

15. We followed with interest the 21<sup>st</sup> Autumn Meeting of the OSCE PA, which took place in November in Yerevan, and the Mediterranean Forum, and we look forward to following the upcoming Winter Meeting later this month.

16. In conclusion, we wish you all the very best in the continuation of your proactive leadership of the OSCE PA.

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

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