



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Permanent Council No 1210 Vienna, 20 December 2018

EU Statement in Response to the Address by the Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe Ms. Dunja Mijatovic

1. The European Union welcomes back to the Permanent Council the Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe Ms. Dunja Mijatovic.
2. The EU highly values your work and we applaud your efforts to advance the human rights situation in Europe. We support your recent call to governments to recommit to the values and principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, expressed on the occasion of its 70th anniversary, and become even stronger advocates for human rights. The EU remains on the side of those who stand up for human rights each and every day and a vocal advocate for human rights in all multilateral fora, including in the OSCE.
3. The OSCE and the Council of Europe have a well-established and long-lasting relationship, based on shared principles, as well as on a common goal: the promotion of peace, stability and security on the basis of democracy, rule of law and respect for human rights in Europe and beyond. We welcome the continuous dialogue and practical cooperation between the OSCE and Council of Europe, in particular in the identified priority areas: fight against terrorism, combatting trafficking in human beings, promoting tolerance and non-discrimination and protection of human rights of persons belonging to national minorities. For both the Council of Europe and OSCE, the implementation of existing obligations and commitments by all members and participating States is essential. With regard to the Council of Europe, we call on countries to respect the obligations arising from membership. The judgements of the European Court of Human Rights must be implemented; every member should be looking to deepen its cooperation with the Council for Europe when addressing serious domestic issues; and budgetary contributions should not be used as a means of pressure in pursuit of a political agenda.

4. Ms. Mijatovic, in your work you have addressed a range of important human rights challenges facing our region, both thematic as well as country specific situations. The European Union shares many of the concerns you have expressed: the shrinking space of civil society organisations and the smear campaigns directed towards them; the growing pressure on human rights defenders and journalists – we see that you devoted attention to the case of Oyub Titiev and we thank you for all your undertakings with regard to this case, which we are also following closely; the restrictions on freedom of expression, media freedom and freedom of assembly. You also called attention to the defense of human rights of LGBTI persons, Roma and Sinti, and persons with disabilities; to human rights protection in the context of counter-terrorism policies and measures, as well as when dealing with migration flows. We also thank you for the dedicated work to gender equality, women’s and girls’ rights and on preventing and combating violence against women and girls.
5. The recent adoption of the decision on safety of journalists at the Milan Ministerial Council, after the well-known extensive efforts of the past years, by subsequent Chairmanships, as well of a cross-dimensional decision on preventing and combating violence against women is a proof that the OSCE participating States have committed to tackle some of these challenges. The European Union will continue to work on strengthening respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, to combat all forms of discrimination and promote tolerance, as well as to advance the implementation of our existing commitments, including in the OSCE.
6. As you know, the human rights situation on the Crimean Peninsula is alarming and deteriorating since the illegal annexation of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol by the Russian Federation. Since your visit to the peninsula in 2014 in your previous capacity, as well as the visit of your predecessor, there have been new serious developments and deepening repression of those opposing the illegal annexation of Crimea and Sevastopol, including of the Crimean Tatars and Ukrainian speaking minorities. We would welcome your views on how regular access of international human rights monitoring bodies could be re-established in full respect of Ukraine’s sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders and, more

broadly, how the OSCE and the Council of Europe could further cooperate in tackling the most urgent human rights challenges stemming from the acts of aggression by the Russian Federation against Ukraine and illegal annexation of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol

7. In concluding, the EU thanks you, Commissioner Mijatovic, for your engagement during your tenure and we look forward to continuing the good cooperation with you for the rest of your term.

The Candidate Countries the FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO* and ALBANIA*, the EFTA countries ICELAND and LIECHTENSTEIN, 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 and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.