



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Permanent Council No. 1438 Vienna, 7 September 2023

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

1. The European Union warmly welcomes for the first time to the Permanent Council Ms Pia Kauma, President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly. We congratulate you on your election at the recent Annual Meeting of the Parliamentary Assembly in Vancouver. We would also like to thank past President, Margareta Cederfelt, for her leadership during her tenure.
2. The established practice of inviting the President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly to address the Permanent Council contributes to strengthening our close cooperation. We closely follow the manifold activities of the parliamentary side of our Organisation, notably with regard to Russia's unprovoked, unjustified and illegal war of aggression against Ukraine.
3. As you assume your new leadership role, Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine continues unabated, causing unspeakable suffering for the people in Ukraine. Additionally, it affects the whole OSCE region and people worldwide.
4. We reiterate our resolute condemnation of Russia's aggression against Ukraine, which constitutes a manifest violation of the UN Charter and the principles of the Helsinki Final Act, and recall our unwavering support for Ukraine's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognised borders, as well as its inherent right of self-defence against the Russian aggression. The EU will continue to provide strong financial, economic, humanitarian, military and diplomatic support to Ukraine and its people for as long as it takes.

5. The Annual Session in Vancouver primarily focused on Russia's brutal and reckless war of aggression, and rightly so. The Vancouver Declaration and many of the resolutions adopted comprehensively address the devastating consequences of the war, sending clear and strong condemnations of the Russian aggressor and its accomplice, Belarus, and assuring that Russia is and will be held fully accountable for its war of aggression against Ukraine.
6. We welcome the establishment of an Ad Hoc Committee on Ukraine, which will help keep Russia's war of aggression high on the agenda, support the parliament of Ukraine, and serve as a contact point for parliamentary consultations on various issues related to Russia's war of aggression.
7. The Vancouver Declaration and a dedicated resolution also addressed the situation in the Republic of Moldova, condemning the Russian Federation's illegitimate attempts to destabilise the situation in the country and expressing support for the mandate and work of the OSCE Mission to Moldova.
8. Reflecting the current times, the Vancouver Declaration dedicates an unprecedented fourth chapter to the institutional sustainability of our Organisation. We share the deep concern expressed about "the increased attempts to misuse the OSCE consensus rule to block the functionality of the Organisation and the adoption of the Unified Budget".
9. Discussions in Vancouver indicate that other regions and thematic issues deserve attention, including the multiple challenges faced by the Central Asian participating States as a result of the situation in Afghanistan. Those enduring the consequences of conflicts and violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms deserve our sustained attention.
10. Unresolved conflicts persist in the OSCE region. 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, and remains fully committed to facilitate efforts to secure sustainable peace and stability in the whole South Caucasus.

11. Over three years after the fraudulent presidential elections in Belarus the human rights situation is worse than ever. Currently, more than 1,500 political prisoners suffer in appalling conditions. The Lukashenka regime has also become a threat to regional and international security and, since 24 February 2022, it has become an accomplice in Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine. We have adopted sanctions in response to the regime's internal repression and its support to Russia's illegal war of aggression. The EU will continue to stand with Belarusians on their path to an independent, democratic, and prosperous country as part of a peaceful Europe.
12. Lasting security cannot be sustained without respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, democracy, and the rule of law. This was reflected in the Annual Session's theme on *"Strengthening Regional Security by Fostering Democratic and Inclusive Societies: The Role of the OSCE PA"*. The OSCE autonomous institutions – ODIHR, HCNM and RFOM – executive structures, and field operations deserve our steadfast support. It is the responsibility of all of us to preserve their strong mandates and ensure their proper functioning. We applaud the field missions that have continued to deliver and assist the participating States. In this regard, we share your concern about the limited extension of the mandate of the OSCE mission to Moldova.
13. 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.

14. The work of the Parliamentary Assembly and the governmental side of our Organisation have the common aim of strengthening the Organisation 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. Many parliamentarians from EU Member States are actively engaged in this important work. We appreciate the Parliamentary Assembly's continued support for the OSCE and closely follow the work of the "Call for Action/Helsinki +50" initiative. In this regard, as we approach the 50th anniversary in less than two years, we join you in stressing the need to uphold the commitments made in 1975. The very same commitments that Russia has blatantly violated with its war of aggression against Ukraine.

15. We will follow with attention the Autumn Meeting scheduled in November in Yerevan and the Mediterranean Forum taking place in conjunction.

16. In conclusion, we wish you all the very best in your new leadership role.

The Candidate Countries NORTH MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO*, ALBANIA*, UKRAINE, the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA, and BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA*, and 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.