



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE CiO Warsaw Human Dimension Conference Warsaw, 2-13 October 2023

EU statement – Plenary session 1 Democratic institutions

1. Resilient, inclusive and democratic societies are fundamental for the effective functioning of democratic institutions at national, regional and local levels. Likewise, equal participation in political and public life is critical for democracy, the rule of law, adherence to human rights and fundamental freedoms.
2. Democratic institutions are foremost about the people, hence the principles agreed on in Copenhagen (1990) and in Moscow (1991) are still valid. These principles are relevant in particular when thousands of people in Ukraine face deportation, widespread and systematic violations of human rights and repression as a result of Russia's unprovoked, unjustified and illegal war of aggression against Ukraine.
3. The EU strongly condemns Russia's attempts to legitimise its illegal military control and attempted annexation of parts of Ukrainian territories through illegitimate so-called "elections" in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the City of Sevastopol and in parts of the Donetsk, Luhansk, Zaporizhzhia and Kherson regions. We echo the OSCE leadership that such "elections" organised by the Russian Federation in Ukraine's temporarily and illegally occupied territories have no validity under international law. Such attempts were also condemned in the UNGA Resolution adopted on 12 October 2022.
4. The full, equal and meaningful participation of women in all aspects of political and public life is the fundament of a democratic society, helping to advance gender equality. Inclusive participation of youth in decision making is also an important part of democratic governance. The 1991 Moscow Document calls on the participating States to ensure an equal opportunity for all groups in society including persons with disabilities and persons

belonging to national minorities to participate fully and on equal terms in the life of societies, including in political and public life.

5. We reiterate our full support for the mandate and autonomy of ODIHR, in particular its election observation work. We commend ODIHR's efforts throughout the OSCE region to build democratic institutions; hold genuine and transparent elections; and increase respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It is deeply regrettable that ODIHR continues to be underfunded through the Unified Budget. ODIHR must be sufficiently staffed and resourced to carry out its vital work and we call on all participating States to ensure that it receives the necessary funds.

Recommendations:

- Improve on civic and legal education, in order for the public to understand why democratic institutions are important and needed.
- Foster the development of effective local democracy through enhancing transparency, accountability and inclusiveness of elections, and encourage political pluralism.
- Support freedom of the media - a prerequisite for credible, inclusive and transparent democratic processes.
- Take measures to increase participation of persons belonging to under-represented groups in decision making and political life, in particular women, youth, persons belonging to national, ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities as well as persons with disabilities.
- Cooperate closely with ODIHR Election Observation Missions (EOMs).
- Ensure that ODIHR has sufficient resources to conduct its activities in line with its mandate.

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