



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE CiO Warsaw Human Dimension Conference 2-13 October 2023

EU statement - Closing Session

1. The European Union thanks the Chair of North Macedonia and ODIHR for excellent organization of the **Warsaw Human Dimension Conference**. We thank the moderators, introductory speakers, civil society representatives, interpreters and all who contributed to the conference's success. Many of the participants took great risks to talk to us, including those who travelled through war-torn Ukraine. Your commitment is an example for us all.
2. While we underline the unique character of the regular Human Dimension Implementation Meeting, we appreciate this opportunity for comprehensive dialogue – we have listened carefully to the concerns expressed, and we are committed to working on addressing challenges within the EU.
3. Our discussions continued to be overshadowed by **Russia's unprovoked, unjustified and illegal war of aggression against Ukraine**. We regret that the Russian delegation did not participate to face the terrifying accounts of war crimes, crimes against humanity and other atrocity crimes committed by the Russian Armed Forces in Ukraine, as well as accounts of internal repression.
4. We reiterate that Russia must fully respect the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine within its internationally recognised borders and immediately and unconditionally cease its illegal war of aggression against Ukraine, and completely and unconditionally withdraw all of its forces and military equipment from the entire territory of Ukraine within its internationally recognised borders. The Belarusian authorities must stop enabling the aggression and abide by their international obligations.
5. There will be no impunity. The OSCE Moscow Mechanism reports and the ODIHR monitoring are an essential contribution to collecting and analysing facts with a view

to presenting these to accountability mechanisms that have, or may have in the future, jurisdiction, as was testified to at the side event *Deportation of Ukrainian Children Amidst Russia's War of Aggression: How to Ensure Accountability and Children's Return*, co-sponsored by the EU and its Member States. The event highlighted the need for urgent action to ensure the return of all Ukrainian children and their reunification with families. Another EU co-sponsored side event - organized by the Ukrainian Human Rights Centre ZMINA - drew attention to the situation of political prisoners in the illegally annexed Crimea. A number of other side events highlighted the deeply worrying link between external aggression and internal repression in in Russia and Belarus, as testified by many in the course of this meeting.

6. The EU continues to closely monitor the dramatic situation arising from the mass exodus of Armenians from Nagorno-Karabakh in the wake of Azerbaijan's military operation on 19 and 20 September and months of blockade of the Lachin Corridor. Azerbaijan bears the responsibility to ensure the rights and security of Nagorno-Karabakh Armenians, including their right to live in their homes in dignity, without intimidation and discrimination, and to create the conditions for their safe, dignified and lasting return. Their cultural heritage and their property rights must also be guaranteed and protected by Azerbaijan. For the moment, the priority is to provide humanitarian aid to Nagorno-Karabakh Armenians and the EU and its Member States stand ready to provide additional aid in this regard. The EU reaffirms its support for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Azerbaijan and Armenia. We call on Azerbaijan to reaffirm its unequivocal commitment to the territorial integrity of Armenia, in compliance with the 1991 Alma-Ata Declaration.

Madam/Mr Moderator,

7. Numerous speakers have deplored the increasing pressure faced by human rights defenders, including women human rights defenders; restrictive legislation; as well as intimidation and violence against journalists and other media actors, online and offline. We regret that some delegations chose not to participate in these discussions. We also witnessed attempts by some delegations to whitewash the situation in their countries by employing organisations distracting attention from real issues.

8. The last two weeks have proven that our OSCE commitments are more relevant than ever. While we discussed tolerance and non-discrimination and countering antisemitism, our OSCE Partner for Co-operation Israel was struck with multiple and indiscriminate attacks by Hamas, which we condemn in the strongest terms. We deeply deplore the loss of lives. The EU calls for an immediate cessation of these senseless attacks and violence, which will only further increase tensions on the ground and seriously undermine Palestinian people's aspirations for peace. The EU stands in solidarity with Israel which has the right to defend itself in line with international law, in the face of such violent and indiscriminate attacks.
9. We welcome that newly launched ODIHR *Guidelines on Principles of Democratic Lawmaking and Better Law* and the RFoM *Guidelines for Monitoring Online Violence Against Female Journalists*. The EU will continue to call on all participating States to respect and support the mandates of the OSCE autonomous institutions and to live up to their commitments. We will continue to stand with human rights defenders and to speak out against the shrinking space for civil society in the OSCE region.

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

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