



## EUROPEAN UNION

### OSCE Permanent Council No. 1376 Vienna, 2 June 2022

#### **EU Statement in response to the Secretary-General's Report on the Implications of Afghanistan for the OSCE Region**

1. The European Union thanks the Secretary-General for her timely thematic report on developing a whole-of-OSCE approach to the security challenges resulting from the situation in Afghanistan. We welcome the increased focus on Central Asia, also illustrated by the ongoing visit of the Polish CiO to the region and the planned visit of the Secretary General.
2. At the Stockholm Ministerial Council last December, Ministers discussed the importance of a peaceful and stable Afghanistan for the stability and development of the OSCE region and of participating States in Central Asia, in particular. We would like to thank again Sweden, as former OSCE Chairpersonship and current Chair of the Asian Partners for Co-operation group, for including Afghanistan in the agenda of the Stockholm Ministerial Council and for convening tomorrow a special meeting of the Asian Partners for Co-operation group, specifically dedicated to the regional consequences of developments in Afghanistan.
3. Our discussions today and tomorrow take place against the backdrop of Russia's unprovoked, unjustified and illegal war of aggression against Ukraine, which we condemn in the strongest possible terms. This war and its wide-reaching consequences are a stark reminder that the security and stability of the whole OSCE region is closely interlinked. Central Asia's security and stability is also affected by Russia's war. In view of that, it is crucial the OSCE institutions and participating States maintain and increase the support to the Central Asian region, which faces numerous challenges.

4. We welcome the focus of the report on the activities being implemented or developed by the OSCE Secretariat, autonomous Institutions and field missions in order to mitigate risks, address vulnerabilities and pursue opportunities stemming from the situation in Afghanistan - with the overall aim to enhance support to the Central Asian participating States.
5. The European Union is committed to peace and long-term stability in Afghanistan, based on the five benchmarks defined in the European Council Conclusions of 21 September 2021, and in the Central Asia region. We continue to work closely with all relevant local, regional and international actors in addressing the humanitarian, socio-economic, political and human rights crisis in Afghanistan and related challenges in neighbouring countries, including to ensure safety and security at the borders. Combatting terrorism and preventing the use of Afghan territory by international terrorist groups remains at the core of the EU's collective engagement in the country. The EU is also strongly committed to supporting the people of Afghanistan. The actions of the Taliban directed against women and girls and the violation of their rights are highly worrying. Free and equal access to health, employment and education are essential, as well as freedom of movement.
6. The EU takes positive note of the results achieved and activities planned through the targeted allocation of UB resources and different extra budgetary projects. We particularly welcome the launch of a new repository programme to catalyse funding and ensure further coordination of existing and new extra-budgetary projects, as well as the focus on priority sectors, such as border management and security, counter-terrorism cooperation, energy security, water and natural resources management, education, women and youth empowerment.
7. In conclusion, allow me to reiterate the EU's appreciation for the valuable contribution that the OSCE – with its comprehensive concept of security and long-standing experience in the region – can make to mitigate risks and address challenges related to the crisis in Afghanistan, particularly in neighbouring participating States.

The Candidate Countries TURKEY, REPUBLIC of NORTH MACEDONIA\*, MONTENEGRO\* and ALBANIA\*, the Country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and Potential Candidate BOSNIA and

HERZEGOVINA, and the EFTA countries ICELAND, LIECHTENSTEIN and NORWAY, members of the European Economic Area, as well as UKRAINE, the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA, GEORGIA and ANDORRA align themselves with this statement.

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