



EUROPEAN UNION

**OSCE Permanent Council No. 1252
Vienna, 12 December 2019**

EU Statement in Response to the Address by the Secretary General of the Council of Europe, Ms. Marija Pejčinović Burić

The European Union warmly welcomes to the Permanent Council the Secretary General of the Council of Europe, Ms. Marija Pejčinović Burić.

Cooperation between the EU and the Council of Europe is longstanding and it is based on the shared values of human rights, democracy and rule of law. Our strategic partnership aims at ensuring coherence and complementarity between the two organisations. Our relationship remains solid and represents a milestone for the protection of human rights in a vast area of the world. In this context, we reaffirm our commitment to the EU's accession to the European Convention on Human Rights, with the objective to reinforce the common values of the Union and enhance the coherence of fundamental rights protection in Europe.

While being two different organisations, the OSCE and the Council of Europe have 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. For both the Council of Europe and OSCE, the implementation of existing obligations and commitments by all members and participating States is essential. The judgements of the European Court of Human Rights must be executed. 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 rights of persons belonging to national minorities. When it comes to combating intolerance and discrimination, we see merit in further looking to improving the situation of Roma and Sinti or to addressing also the discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity, by complementing our work and avoiding duplication.

Besides the focal areas identified in the PC Decision No. 670, co-operation could be further pursued in other areas such as countering all forms of torture, opposing the death penalty as

well as areas where joint work has already proven productive, such as media freedom, including safety of journalists, or human rights education.

The Council of Europe and the OSCE should coordinate their work on combating and eliminating violence against women and girls, as on one hand within the Council of Europe we have one of the most comprehensive international treaties on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence, and on the other we have an impressive body of OSCE commitments, complemented with thematic reports, data collection and projects of the OSCE institutions, structures and field missions.

Election observation and assistance in ensuring that electoral systems meet international standards are extremely important areas for both Organisations. International election observation activities and assistance in matters related to elections are enhanced when the OSCE/ODIHR, the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe and European Parliament work in partnership. We encourage continued co-operation and coordination.

We also continue to encourage the well-established cooperation between ODIHR and the Venice Commission in presenting legal reviews or in elaborating common Guidelines on specific topics, as well as the close cooperation between the HCNM and the Venice Commission.

We would be interested to learn more about how we could better use, in your opinion, each other's comparative advantages in promoting our mutually desired outcomes, whilst fully respecting mandates and avoiding duplication.

In concluding, the European Union looks forward to continuing the close cooperation between the OSCE and the Council of Europe and we wish you, Ms. Marija Pejčinović Burić, every success in the exercise of your mandate. The EU takes the opportunity to thank the French Presidency of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe and wish the very best to Georgia which has recently assumed its Presidency.

Thank you.

The Candidate Countries REPUBLIC of NORTH MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO*, SERBIA* and ALBANIA*, the Country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and Potential Candidate BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA, and the EFTA countries ICELAND and LIECHTENSTEIN, members of the European Economic Area, as well as the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA, GEORGIA, ANDORRA and SAN MARINO align themselves with this statement.
* Republic of North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.