



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Permanent Council No 1114 Vienna, 4 October 2016

EU statement in response to the current issue raised by Kyrgyzstan on the participation of Mr. Batyrov in the Human Dimension Implementation Meeting

The European Union believes that the OSCE Human Dimension Platform provides a unique platform to interact with civil society, an essential partner for all participating States in implementing their OSCE commitments. HDIM is an opportunity for all of us to be held to account in relation to our OSCE commitments and to follow-up on the recommendation that participants at this meeting bring to us. We thank, once more, ODIHR and German Chairmanship for convening another successful meeting.

The participation in HDIM of human rights defenders, civil society representatives or journalists should not be restricted, neither by the participating States, nor by the organizers. This would be against the commitments we have all made and would only undermine the very purpose of the meeting.

We regret that the Kyrgyz delegation has chosen to leave HDIM and not engage in further exchange of views. We encourage them to continue the dialogue with all civil society representatives and we count on their participation in the upcoming Human Dimension events.

On a general note, we are concerned by disturbing reports that some human rights defenders suffered consequences for exercising their rights by taking part in HDIM. It is States' responsibility to ensure that those who speak up for human rights, be it in their home countries, or in any international fora, are protected. We call on all participating States to abide by their OSCE commitments.

In reaction to the point raised by the Kyrgyz Delegation, the European Union considers that the current mandate of the OSCE Centre in Bishkek remains fully relevant and suitable for Kyrgyzstan. Its efficient and useful work should be

continued in its three dimensions. Changing the mandate would affect the capacity of the OSCE presence to continue to address the needs of the host country effectively. In this context, the European Union attaches great importance to maintaining the OSCE presence in Kyrgyzstan at the same level.

The Candidate Countries the FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA* and MONTENEGRO*, the Country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and Potential Candidate BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA, and the EFTA countries ICELAND and NORWAY, members of the European Economic Area, as well as UKRAINE align themselves with this statement.

* The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Montenegro continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.