



EUROPEAN UNION

**OSCE Permanent Council No 1193
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**EU statement in response to H.E. State Secretary of the
MFA and Special Representative for the 2019 Slovak OSCE
Chairmanship, Lukáš Parížek**

The European Union and its Member States warmly welcome the State Secretary of the MFA and Special Representative of the incoming 2019 Slovak OSCE Chairmanship, H.E. Lukáš Parížek to the Permanent Council. Mr. State Secretary, we thank you for assuming the OSCE Chairmanship at a challenging time for European security and for presenting your priorities – *effective multilateralism, conflict prevention and people* – for our work next year.

The OSCE region and its people continue to face issues of the greatest concern, notably the violation of international law and of fundamental OSCE principles. The principles and commitments we agreed in Helsinki and Paris remain the foundation for sustainable peace in Europe. For multilateralism to be effective, respect for those principles and commitments must be restored.

Russia's illegal annexation of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol, which we will not recognise, and the clear violation of Ukrainian sovereignty and territorial integrity by acts of aggression by the Russian armed forces since February 2014, remain the most serious violations of our fundamental OSCE principles and commitments today. We therefore welcome that the resolution of this conflict will be at the top of the Slovak CiO agenda.

We fully share your call that a sustainable, political solution is needed to this conflict. Such a solution must restore respect for Ukraine's sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity within its internationally recognised borders. The full implementation of the Minsk Agreements is paramount in this regard, as well as unconditional respect of the ceasefire and full, safe, unconditional and unhindered

access for the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission throughout Ukraine. We strongly support the efforts in the Normandy format as well as the work in the Trilateral Contact Group.

The EU moreover appreciates continued attention to the resolution of protracted conflicts in Georgia, in the Republic of Moldova and the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. We encourage the incoming CiO to build on progress achieved and reiterate our strong support to the existing negotiation formats.

The consequences of these conflicts, not least the humanitarian ones, remind us all of our responsibility to muster the political will to put these conflicts to an end. We should therefore ensure that the OSCE's conflict prevention and resolution capacities, including mediation, are sufficiently equipped to prevent and respond to crises and conflicts. The Field Operations are another key OSCE asset. Our efforts have to be gender-sensitive and – in line with the Women, Peace and Security agenda – women must play a significant role in such processes, also at the negotiation table.

We strongly believe in the OSCE's comprehensive approach to security. We continue to be concerned about ongoing and increasing restrictions on civil society, crackdowns on human rights and fundamental freedoms, growing pressure on human rights defenders, attacks on journalists and other media actors as well as increasing intolerance in many parts of the OSCE region. These worrying trends represent serious challenges to our common security. Lasting security cannot be sustained without respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, democracy and the rule of law. We thus underline the importance we attach to the third dimension in the OSCE concept of comprehensive security.

As you very well stated, our OSCE commitments are more relevant than ever and we call on all participating States to redouble the focus on their implementation. We share your view that the autonomous institutions, whose work and mandate we fully support, play an indispensable role in the implementation of commitments across the OSCE area and we must ensure that they remain able to fulfil it. We also believe civil society is an essential partner for the implementation of our commitments and therefore safeguarding the open character of the OSCE in relation to civil society organisations is of key importance to us.

We agree that it is essential to rebuild trust and revitalise cooperative security in Europe, based on our principles and commitments. The Structured Dialogue provides an opportunity for doing so and we are ready to develop it further in accordance with the Hamburg Declaration. It is essential to restore full respect for international law and fundamental OSCE principles by all participating States. We value this dialogue as a means to address current and future challenges and risks in the OSCE area. Fostering a greater understanding on these issues could serve as a common, solid basis for a way forward through an open, transparent and inclusive exchange of views carried out in good faith.

Furthermore, we reiterate our strong commitment to the full implementation in letter and spirit of the existing commitments in the politico-military area and continue to support a substantial update and modernisation of the Vienna Document, as well as further development of Conventional Arms Control, Confidence and Security Building Measures and other instruments in the politico-military area. We emphasise the need to work towards creating an environment conducive to reinvigorating Conventional Arms Control and CSBMs.

Mr. State Secretary, the OSCE makes a valuable contribution in preventing and countering transnational and emerging threats. OSCE capacity building efforts across the security sector are most useful and help to implement UN commitments. We welcome your continued focus on cyber and ICT related security issues and look forward to further implementation of our CBMs. You also rightly emphasise the threat posed by violent extremism and radicalisation that leads to terrorism, as we need not only to counter terrorism but also to prevent it. We stress also here that respecting human rights and working with civil society contributes to the effectiveness and sustainability of our efforts.

In the second dimension, we welcome that security aspects of good governance, connectivity, energy cooperation and new technologies, as well as good environmental governance including water management, will feature on our workplan also in 2019. In the context of energy security, the link to sustainable development is a priority for us. We would also welcome opportunities to address the security implications of climate change. These priorities reflect the potential of the economic

and environmental dimension to contribute to confidence building, cooperation, security and stability in the OSCE region.

Our Partner countries face similar challenges, hence, strengthening our co-operation with them should remain a priority. We thank Ambassador Boháč for ably chairing the Mediterranean Contact Group and for his contribution in strengthening OSCE's co-operation with our southern neighbourhood. In this regard, we look forward to the OSCE Mediterranean Conference that will be held in Malaga in October.

To conclude, halfway into the Italian Chairmanship, it is important to pave the way for strong results across all three dimensions at the Ministerial Council in Milan. We need to invest in our organisation, not least by ensuring financial stability. We thus reiterate the need to find an agreement, before the end of this year, on scales of contributions for 2018 and onwards, and for a swift adoption of the 2019 budget in order for the OSCE to fulfil its mandate. This would reinforce much needed trust among participating States and strengthen the foundation for the Slovak Chairmanship to promote effective multilateralism by putting people and conflict prevention centre stage.

Mr. State Secretary, we look forward to working with you next year. Of course, you can count on the strong support of the European Union and we wish you and your team every success.

The Candidate Countries the FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO* and ALBANIA*, the EFTA countries ICELAND and LIECHTENSTEIN, members of the European Economic Area, as well as UKRAINE, the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA, GEORGIA, ANDORRA and SAN MARINO align themselves with this statement.

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