



EUROPEAN UNION

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**EU Statement in Response to the President of the OSCE
Parliamentary Assembly, Ms Christine Muttonen**

The European Union expresses its warmest thanks to the President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, Ms Christine Muttonen, and welcomes her once again to the Permanent Council. Madame President, we thank you for your presentation today and wish to congratulate you on your re-election at the Annual Session in Minsk. We would like to thank Belarus for hosting the Annual Meeting of the Parliamentary Assembly.

The Parliamentary Assembly is an important arena for dialogue and mutual confidence-building, conflict resolution and efforts in democracy promotion, rule of law, human rights and fundamental freedoms. In this regard, the European Union welcomes the work of the Assembly's first Special Representative on Mediation, Ilkka Kanerva, President Emeritus of the OSCE PA, and his latest report to the Parliamentary Assembly in its Autumn Meeting in Andorra.

Women remain underrepresented in conflict resolution and mediation efforts also in the OSCE area so we also commend the adoption, during the 26th Annual Session in Minsk, of the Resolution on Promoting Gender Inclusive and Responsive Mediation. We wish to underline the importance of gender inclusiveness both as a fundamental principle and in practical terms: engaging women in peace building and post-conflict reconstruction increases the long-term viability and sustainability of these solutions.

We strongly support the Parliamentary Assembly's integral role in Election Observation and recognise that the PA's ongoing work in this area, in partnership with ODIHR, enables the OSCE to execute one of its core tasks, strengthening democratic institutions and ensuring the political rights of the citizens.

Madame President, the concept of comprehensive security was a key theme at your Autumn Meeting in Andorra, which we warmly thank for organising the Meeting and showing once more its commitment to the OSCE. We thank the PA for highlighting the role of education as a tool for increasing tolerance, combatting radicalisation and promoting the integration of refugees as it contributes both to social and international stability.

We appreciate that the Parliamentary Assembly has taken active interest in the issue of migration through its ad-hoc committee on Migration. The challenge of large movements of migrants has to be addressed in a comprehensive way and parliamentarians can play a constructive role here. We look forward to the presentation by the Chair of the ad hoc committee on migration, Mr Filippo Lombardi, at the forthcoming Mediterranean Conference in Palermo.

The European Union joins the Parliamentary Assembly in urging all OSCE participating States to take action in response to the challenges posed by the growing impacts of climate change. As discussed in the EEDIM this week, ratifying and fulfilling the obligations set in the 2015 Paris agreement is a first step on our way to managing crises brought about by extreme weather conditions that also lead to poverty, involuntary migration and possibly conflict.

The Parliamentary Assembly also addressed cyber security. The European Union echoes the need to take measures to prevent conflict or tension arising from the use of information and communication technologies.

Our priority remains to restore respect for the fundamental principles upon which the European security order and the OSCE are based and we welcome that this is a continued focus of the Parliamentary Assembly. In this context,

the EU recalls its unwavering support to the sovereignty, territorial integrity, unity and independence of Ukraine. We reiterate our strong condemnation of the illegal annexation of Crimea and Sevastopol to the Russian Federation and we will not recognise it.

We noted during the Forum for Security Cooperation on 27 September 2017 that the interests of the EU and PA on the subject of the Democratic Control of Armed and Security Forces are closely aligned. We would therefore be interested in your thoughts on the role the PA might play in progressing this agenda.

Madame President, we highly value your personal commitment in what has been an active year for the Parliamentary Assembly. We would gladly hear any recommendations you might have for future priorities of this body and how to make the most of the experience and expertise of your members. We are looking forward to a fruitful co-operation between the Parliamentary Assembly and other OSCE institutions also in the future.

The Candidate Countries the FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO* and ALBANIA*, the Country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and Potential Candidate BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA, and the EFTA country LIECHTENSTEIN, member 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.