



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Permanent Council No. 1325 Vienna, 22 July 2021

EU Statement on the Review of OSCE cooperation with the Asian Partners

FINAL (627 words)

1. The EU would like to thank the Swedish Chairpersonship for providing the opportunity to review at the Permanent Council the OSCE cooperation with the Asian Partners. We also thank the Albanian Chair of the Asian Partners for Co-Operation Group and our Asian Partners for the choice of topics for this year's rolling schedule. The three meetings held so far this year on good governance and the rule of law, non-traditional security challenges and women leadership in global health emergencies have provided excellent occasions to share views and best practices on issues of common interest.
2. The OSCE's Asian Partnership continues to provide opportunities to learn from each other's experiences and explore ways to work together to enhance our shared security across the three dimensions of the OSCE's activities. We welcome the adoption at the 2020 Tirana Ministerial Council of the Declaration on Co-Operation with the OSCE Asian Partners, which coincided with the 25th anniversary of the OSCE Asian Partnership. The Declaration provides a framework to strengthen dialogue and cooperation with our Asian Partners across the three dimensions of the OSCE and provides renewed impetus to our collaboration.
3. We appreciate the active engagement of the Asian Partners in OSCE events and activities, in particular through the practice of voluntary reporting on OSCE commitments, as well as the contribution of Asian Partners to OSCE extra-

budgetary projects. Increased regional activities have also demonstrated the dynamism of the OSCE's cooperation with the Asian Partners. These include the recently held Third Inter-Regional Conference on Cyber/ICT organised by the Republic of Korea on 22-23 June. The EU supports efforts to strengthen cross-regional cooperation on cyber/ICT security through regular discussions and exchanges of experiences, in particular on the implementation of regional cyber confidence-building measures (CBMs).

4. Fighting corruption and combatting organised crime, while protecting human rights and fostering inclusive growth, remains a priority for the EU, also in our relation to our Asian Partners. The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated existing challenges and often brought about new corrupt practices as governments are trying to recover from crisis by spending rapidly. High level of corruption has a direct effect on foreign investments and business climate. Thus measures to promote transparency and accountability, together with oversight, in particular by independent media and empowered civil society, are essential. In this respect, we find it important to develop and share e-government solutions that limit space for corruption, enhance transparency and contribute to improvement of investment and business climate. Recognizing that corruption disproportionately affects women and the vulnerable groups, as we did in the last year's Ministerial Council Decision (on Preventing and Combating Corruption through Digitalization and Increased Transparency), is a step forward. However, in order to contribute to the improvement of business climate, also through advancing towards gender equality, we have to actively promote women's participation in the development and implementation of anti-corruption activities as well as empower women and youth to stand up to corrupt practices. We welcome the opportunities to discuss and share our experiences on the pertinent issue of corruption and good governance, including with the Asian Partners.
5. We look forward to the upcoming OSCE Asian Conference in September 2021 on "Common responses to emerging challenges in advancing comprehensive security". We thank Thailand for hosting the Conference and the Albanian Chair for its support, and look forward to the dedicated thematic sessions on

transnational organised crime, sustainable development and human rights and public health.

6. In conclusion, we would like to reiterate our conviction that the OSCE will continue to play an important role as a valuable platform for dialogue and sharing regional experiences. The EU remains committed to pursuing and strengthening cooperation with our Asian Partners, including through the OSCE, wherever the organisation can be of assistance with its comprehensive approach to security.

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 UKRAINE, 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.