



## EUROPEAN UNION

### **OSCE Permanent Council No. 1354 Vienna, 10 February 2022**

#### **EU Statement in response to the Presentations by the Chairs of the Three Committees**

1. The European Union thanks the Chairs of the Security, the Economic and Environmental and the Human Dimension Committees for presenting their priorities for this year and for ensuring a collaborative approach among the Committees. In order to promote a comprehensive approach to security, we must consider challenges and opportunities within each dimension. But to ensure long-term peace and stability, we must also think cross-dimensionally. We welcome your efforts in this respect.
2. The European Union congratulates Ambassador Kinnear and her team on assuming the Chairpersonship of the Security Committee. We attach great importance to the Security Committee, as a forum for discussing non-military security issues and a platform for advancing OSCE commitments related to transnational threats. The first informal meeting of the Committee on 31 January provided an excellent opportunity to reflect on its work, identify topics of common interest, and discuss ways to maximize the impact of our meetings. We welcome the topics selected for the meetings, which cover the full spectrum of transnational threats and build on the priorities of successive Chairmanships to enhance cyber/ICT security, prevent and counter violent extremism and radicalisation leading to terrorism, combat organised crime, and strengthen border security and management. We appreciate the specific focus placed on cybersecurity, with two dedicated thematic meetings, which is in line with the Polish Chairmanship's priorities in the first dimension. The EU also welcomes the attention placed on human rights and gender equality in the work of the Committee, as essential elements to ensure the effectiveness and sustainability of our work to prevent and counter transnational threats.

3. Regarding the working methods of the Committee, we commend your inclusive and consultative approach. We support your intention to continue to promote interactive discussions in a collegial atmosphere, the practical focus and the involvement of a broad range of stakeholders from civil society, academia and field operations.
4. Ambassador Raunig, we welcome you once again as Chair of the Economic and Environmental Committee. We appreciate your dedication to the activities and topics of the Second Dimension. We value the continuity with the work of previous Chairmanships and support your vision of upholding the balance of economic and environmental topics. Considering that the focus of the Economic and Environmental Forum will be on sustainable economic recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic, we appreciate the attention of the Committee meetings to environmental topics, such as sustainable agriculture, sustainable management of natural resources and biodiversity. The EU particularly welcomes the continuation of the focus on climate change, following the recent adoption of the relevant Stockholm Ministerial Council Decision, and we are pleased to see this topic addressed in the first thematic meeting of the year. Climate action and environmental protection are increasingly important elements of the comprehensive approach to security and thus our common responsibility. We also welcome efforts aimed at aligning the work of the Economic and Environmental Committee with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
5. In regard to the working methods of the Committee, we look forward to continuing our active engagement with the field operations in the framework of the Committee meetings, which are essential for getting a clearer picture of concrete economic and environmental activities on the ground. We also support your plans to ensure that proper consideration is given to gender aspects.
6. The EU welcomes that Ambassador Anne-Kirsti Karlsen and her team agreed to continue chairing the HDC and we look forward to our good cooperation in the Human Dimension, which should remain at the forefront of our work. We welcome the extensive choice of topics for the HDC meetings, in particular the focus on fundamental freedoms, as well as the intention to continue mainstreaming gender into the Committee meetings. We see merit in addressing freedom of expression,

freedom of peaceful assembly and association, freedom of religion or belief, as well as addressing intolerance and discrimination in a comprehensive manner, and discussing topics such as gender equality and combating violence against women, human rights defenders, democratic institutions, elections and follow up on ODIHR's recommendations, torture prevention, abolition of death penalty, fight against enforced disappearances and arbitrary detentions.

7. We appreciate your intention to continue involving a broad range of stakeholders in the HDC, as well as circulating concept notes ahead of the meetings and encouraging interactive discussions. We also welcome plans to continue the practice of voluntary reporting. We encourage participating States to make full use of this agenda item, for example to follow up on ODIHR's electoral recommendations.
8. In conclusion, we express our full support to the Chairs of the three Committees and their teams and thank them for their leadership. Your committees' work embodies the OSCE's comprehensive concept of security and we look forward to actively support and contribute to it.

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.