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EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Permanent Council No. 1319
Vienna, 10 June 2021

EU Statement in response to the Report of the Head of the OSCE Programme Office in Bishkek and of the Director of the Bishkek Academy

The European Union and its Member States warmly welcome Ambassador Alexey Rogov for the first time to the Permanent Council and thank him for his comprehensive report. We also warmly welcome the Director of the OSCE Academy, Dr. Alexander Wolters.

We appreciate the Programme Office's achievements despite the COVID19 pandemic and commend the adaption of its work to meet those challenges both internally and within its programmatic activities. We take positive note of the good cooperation between the Programme Office and the host authorities and civil society, including through the Consultative Mechanism and the high-level meetings. We also welcome the Office´s efforts to support the Kyrgyz Republic in its constitutional transition, while upholding and advancing the implementation of OSCE Commitments in all three dimensions.

In the First Dimension, we particularly support the capacity-building activities aimed at preventing violent extremism and radicalization that lead to terrorism. We also endorse the work done in the field of non-proliferation, including the support in capacity building to address chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear (CBRN) threats by providing technical equipment. We recognize the central role the OSCE plays in organizing the removal and destruction of highly dangerous mélange rocket fuel from Soviet times from Kyrgyzstan.

In the Second Dimension, the EU supports the Programme Office's activities related to facilitating digitalization, combating corruption and money laundering, as well as promoting green economy. In addition, we take positive note of the Office's comprehensive activities in facilitating cross-border trade – an activity particularly important in light of the recent border tensions.

With regard to the Third Dimension, we highly welcome the activities related to judicial, electoral, and penitentiary reform including torture prevention, as well as those aimed at combating trafficking in human beings. We also appreciate the Programme Office´s efforts to advance legal reforms and transparent administrative procedures and we call on the Office to continue them.

The EU welcomes the continued support provided by the Programme Office to strengthen democratic institutions and electoral processes. We particularly appreciate the capacity-building activities for members of the election commission and the information initiatives for an inclusive participation of voters in elections. We place trust in the Kyrgyz Republic to implement the recommendations recently published by ODIHR after the election and referendum monitoring earlier this year. The constitutional reform must not be at the expense of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

We commend the Programme Office for advancing women´s participation in all aspects of comprehensive security. Building upon the introduction of the quota for women in local councils in 2019, the Office has had a significant impact in promoting women's political participation through the training it provided for female candidates. We join those in Kyrgyzstan and beyond in commending this success. We also appreciate the capacity building the Office has facilitated for key ministries and major State actors tasked with the implementation of the National Action Plan on Gender Equality and UN Security Council Resolution 1325.

The OSCE Academy is a flagship project for the OSCE. It is developing to become a full-fledged regional centre for higher education and research. We take positive note of this progress. The Academy's recent scientific productivity and international outreach have been remarkable. We welcome the introduction of the Bachelor and PhD programmes and are pleased to hear that the Academy was able to transition to

online learning to cope with COVID19-related challenges. For the sake of continuity, we would like to see the position of the Director placed on a permanent, seconded basis and underline again that a greater part of the Academy´s activities should be included in the Unified Budget.

With regard to the escalation of tensions at the border between the Kyrgyz Republic and the Republic of Tajikistan earlier this year the EU encourages both sides to undertake all the necessary steps to avoid any conflict in the future, and to use exclusively peaceful means to find mutually acceptable and sustainable solutions. The EU reiterates its offer of assistance through its regional programmes dealing with border and water management.

On this occasion, we highlight the EU Strategy on Central Asia, which focuses on promoting resilience, prosperity and regional cooperation. As expressed by the EU Special Representative for Central Asia Peter Burian on his recent visit to Kyrgyzstan, the European Union supports the Kyrgyz Republic in its progress towards democracy, the rule of law, sustainable socio-economic development, good governance and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.

In closing, allow me to reiterate our appreciation for the successful work of the entire OSCE Programme Office in Bishkek as well as of the OSCE Academy and to wish both Ambassador Rogov and Dr Wolters success for their work.

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 and the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA align themselves with this statement.

* Republic of North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.