



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Permanent Council No. 1375 Vienna, 26 May 2022

EU Statement in response to the report by the OSCE Project Coordinator in Ukraine, Ambassador Henrik Villadsen

1. The European Union warmly welcomes Ambassador Henrik Villadsen to the Permanent Council and reiterates its firm support for the OSCE Project Co-ordinator's valuable work in Ukraine. Since the last time you reported to the Permanent Council, Russia has launched a full-scale, brutal war of aggression upon the peaceful and democratic State of Ukraine. Thousands of civilians and Ukrainian servicemen have died or been injured and millions of people have been forced to leave Ukraine or are internally displaced. The European Union condemns Russia's premeditated, unprovoked, unjustified and illegal war of aggression against Ukraine in the strongest possible terms. We call on Russia to immediately and unconditionally cease its military actions and withdraw all its troops and equipment from the entire territory of Ukraine, including the illegally annexed Crimean peninsula. We also reiterate our call on Belarus to stop enabling the Russian aggression and to abide by its international obligations.
2. Against the backdrop of Russia's aggression against Ukraine, we are grateful to you, Ambassador Villadsen, and your able team for maintaining your presence within Ukraine and continuing to deliver results of your programmes and projects within all three OSCE dimensions. As the only OSCE field mission still present on the ground, your role is of utmost importance for our Organisation. The way you have restructured your work and adjusted to the current disastrous circumstances, including your new project designed to provide support for the immediate humanitarian needs of your longstanding partners and vulnerable members of the population, show that this Mission remains highly relevant. We commend your flexibility and competent staff carrying out this work in the current conflict setting.

3. Moreover, the PCU has been undertaking vital work in Ukraine since its establishment in 1999 across a wide range of areas such as rule of law, constitutional and judicial reforms, protection of human rights, combatting domestic violence, gender equality and gender mainstreaming. Since the start of Russia's aggression in 2014, you have also, pursued excellent work in conflict-related fields, such as mine action, combatting illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons and support to environmental rehabilitation in the conflict zone. We applaud you for your successes in these various fields. In addition, the cooperation between your Mission and the EU in Ukraine, including the EU Advisory Mission and EU-funded projects, have always been excellent and we look forward to continuing such exchanges also in the future.

4. The EU would like to express its strong support for the mandate of the OSCE Project Coordinator in Ukraine and to underline the important role that we see for this Mission also in the coming months and years. The PCU has an important role to play in a post-conflict setting, notably by increasing support to Ukraine's humanitarian mine action capacity and by combatting trafficking in human beings as well as small arms and light weapons. Moreover, with its excellent network in Ukrainian society and its expert knowledge about project implementation, the PCU will be of utmost importance during the reconstruction phase. The PCU should therefore continue its work also within areas such as democratization, good governance and rule of law, in order to support the Ukrainian people to continue building a democratic and resilient country, embracing with confidence its European future.

5. In conclusion, with its proven ability to adjust to challenging circumstances and its flexible mandate, covering the whole territory of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders including the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol, the European Union believes that the OSCE Project Coordinator in Ukraine will be a vital tool for this Organisation in the years to come. We wish Ambassador Villadsen and his team all the best in these challenging times and look forward to seeing you back at the Permanent Council soon.

The Candidate Countries TURKEY, REPUBLIC of NORTH MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO* and ALBANIA*, the Country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and Potential Candidate BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA, the EFTA countries ICELAND, LIECHTENSTEIN and NORWAY, 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 and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.