



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Permanent Council No. 1262 Vienna, 12 March 2020

EU Statement in response to the report by the Coordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities Amb. Vuk Žugić

The European Union warmly welcomes the Coordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities, Amb. Vuk Žugić, to the Permanent Council and thanks him for his report. Ambassador Žugić, your remarks have very well illustrated the relevance of economic and environmental issues for the security of our countries and citizens. We assure you of our continued support for strong OSCE engagement in the Economic and Environmental Dimension as an integral part of the Organisation's comprehensive approach to security.

We welcome your vision of economic and environmental co-operation as a tool for confidence building and conflict prevention without compromising on OSCE values and international commitments. We look favourably on your work plan for 2020 and your intention to work on a wide range of areas. We also welcome your efforts to further align OSCE activities with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Strengthening good governance, inter alia through combatting corruption and fostering the rule of law, is crucial to improve the economic environment across the OSCE, which in turn contributes to stability and security. Preventing and combating corruption is among our key priorities in the Economic and Environmental dimension.

We welcome the focus of your office on multifaceted issues such as digital transformation and its ongoing role in modern interconnected societies: supporting economic processes, paperless trade, the fight against corruption and security procedures at the border. We are looking forward to continuing discussing the opportunities arising from new technologies, including those affecting the environment.

We equally appreciate your focus on addressing the security implications of

environmental challenges and climate change. In this context, we welcome your office's activities to promote good environmental governance, inter alia by supporting the multi-stakeholder approach of Aarhus Centres, and your support to SMM's awareness building on environmental risks.

We appreciate the organisation by OCEEA of the event in Strasbourg last November on water diplomacy, which stressed the potential of transboundary water cooperation as a confidence building measure and we would be interested in hearing from you about how you plan to follow up on the event.

We welcome your commitment to fully and comprehensively mainstream gender across the activities. The incorporation of a gender perspective in all OSCE activities is an essential component of the OSCE's comprehensive approach to security – and of particular importance to the EU.

We also appreciate the inclusion of youth perspectives into your work plan as the youth are one of the key stakeholders for our sustainable and secure future.

We thank you for focusing on building on synergies and avoiding duplications. Joining efforts and coordinating activities among OSCE structures and with other international organisations is key to delivering better results. We encourage you to continue in this way. We equally attach great importance to your active and close cooperation with the field operations and thank you for your continued support to them.

We appreciate your effort to make sure that the activities have clear, tangible and measurable results. We also welcome your efforts to make information about your office's work and resources more easily available to participating States.

In conclusion, we thank you and your team for your valuable work and we are looking forward to continuing our good cooperation.

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, LIECHTENSTEIN and NORWAY, members of the European Economic Area, as well as UKRAINE, the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA, ARMENIA, 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.