



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Permanent Council No. 1296 Vienna, 17 December 2020

EU Statement in response to the Presentations by the Chairpersons of the Three Committees

The European Union thanks the Chairs of the Security, Economic and Environmental, and Human Dimension Committees for their leadership in driving the work of the Committees in the three OSCE dimensions and for reporting on their activities for this year.

We thank Ambassador Neil Bush and his team for the excellent work as Chair of the Security Committee. We attach great importance to the activities of the Security Committee, which makes a critical contribution to the work of the OSCE as a forum for discussing non-military security issues and the implementation of OSCE commitments related to transnational threats. During your first year as Chair of the Security Committee, you have put forward an ambitious work program, invited an impressive range of speakers from diverse backgrounds, promoted more interactive debates, involved the OSCE field missions in the discussions, and successfully encouraged participating States to make full use of the practice of voluntary reports. We particularly commend your efforts to ensure gender-balanced panels in all Security Committee meetings, thereby making the full and meaningful representation of female experts in the first dimension a reality.

The European Union welcomes the adoption at the Tirana Ministerial Council of the Declaration on Countering Transnational Organized Crime, the first Security Committee MC deliverable adopted since 2016. The discussions in the Security Committee and the Chairmanship Conference on organized crime had usefully prepared the ground for a deliverable on this topic. However, we regret that, once again, no consensus could be reached on the two draft texts on terrorism. We would like to thank you for your skillful chairing of the Ministerial Council negotiations and for your efforts in ensuring a constructive and positive atmosphere throughout the

discussions. We wish to express the appreciation of the European Union for the valuable work undertaken by you and your team. We stand ready to continue to support and contribute to the work of the Security Committee next year.

We would like to thank all three chairs of the Economic and Environmental Committee in 2020 -Ambassador Sherzod Asadov, Ambassador Igli Hasani and Ambassador Florian Raunig- for their leadership which, together with the Albanian Chairmanship's efforts, contributed to a successful Ministerial Council. We commend the work of the Economic and Environmental Committee, which focused on a range of important topics from corruption, women empowerment and digital transformation to water management, natural resources, and connectivity. We welcome the work on issues related to the environment as it is an integral part of the OSCE comprehensive concept of security. We trust that intensified engagement on these important topics will continue next year. We reiterate our position that a balance between economic and environmental activities is important. We also look forward to including civil society and the private sector in our discussions as much as possible.

We would like to thank Ambassador Ivo Šrámek and his able team for the great work done as Chair of the Human Dimension Committee over the past two years. We welcomed the choice of topics, in particular the focus on freedom of expression, elections, democratic law-making, political participation, human rights defenders, torture prevention, as well as the timely topic of Human Rights and COVID-19.

We appreciate that you continued and strengthened the inclusive and interactive approach of the Human Dimension Committee meetings, which contributed to the involvement of a broad range of stakeholders - from civil society, autonomous institutions and field missions, as well as from other international organizations - and to more engaging discussions. We appreciate the continued practice of voluntary reporting in the Human Dimension Committee and thank those participating States that presented reports and encourage others to share their experience next year. We also appreciate the excellent practice of providing concept papers to steer the discussions.

Ambassador Šrámek, we thank you for your excellent work and wish all the best to your successor, the incoming Norwegian Chair of the Human Dimension Committee, Ambassador Anna-Kirsti Karlsen.

While we regret that at the Tirana MC consensus could not be reached on several texts across the three OSCE dimensions, we welcome that consensus could be reached on important issues of common interest for all participating States. We thank each of you for your efforts in leading the consultations and the negotiations. We trust that the fine work carried out in the three Committees will be continued in the year to come, contributing to the implementation and further strengthening of our OSCE commitments.

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.