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OSCE Permanent Council No. 1255 Vienna, 16 January 2020

EU Statement in response to the President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly

1. The European Union warmly welcomes the President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, Mr. George Tsereteli, and reiterates its support for the **practice** of holding this meeting twice a year, as a valuable tool to improve synergy and dialogue within our Organization.
2. Numerous relevant events have interested the security of our region from your last presence here, eleven weeks ago. We welcome that there have been some recent positive developments on the ground in eastern Ukraine, which may alleviate the unacceptable human suffering of those living in conflict-affected areas. The EU continues to support the international diplomatic efforts within the Trilateral Contact Group and the Normandy format, whose summit held on 9 December in Paris brings hope for an intensified and result-oriented dialogue.
3. A sustainable political solution to the conflict remains a top priority for the EU. We highly appreciate in this regard that, during your last visit to **Ukraine**, you “stood behind Ukraine’s sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders, including Crimea”. We call upon Russia to do likewise. The full implementation of the Minsk Agreements is essential, while the ceasefire remains to be fully implemented and the impediments to the safe, secure and unhindered access of the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission throughout Ukraine must come yet to an



EUROPEAN UNION

end. Russia's illegal annexation of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol, which we condemn and will not recognize, and its destabilization of eastern Ukraine continue to violate fundamental OSCE principles and commitments and remain the most serious security challenge Europe is facing. We value that the PA of the OSCE and you personally pay such a strong attention to the resolution of this conflict.

4. We appreciate your recent engagement for peaceful settlement of the **conflict** in Georgia and the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, which are priorities for the European Union together with the Transdniestrian settlement process. We join you in welcoming the release of Vazha Gaprindashvili, detained on 9 November by the de facto authorities in the Georgian breakaway region of South Ossetia, and thanking those who have been working on this case. We believe that further efforts towards conflict resolution, including their humanitarian aspects, should be carried out in these contexts, as the parliamentarians can contribute to creating the best conditions for the settlement of such conflicts, especially in strengthening political will directed to tangible progress.
5. We value the cooperation between the Parliamentary Assembly and the OSCE **autonomous Institutions** for its contribution to the promotion of comprehensive security in the OSCE region. The human dimension remains among our key priorities, as lasting security cannot be sustained without full respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, democracy and rule of law. We look forward to learning more about the work of the Special Representative on Civil Society Engagement and her impact on the MP's participation in events such as the Human Dimension Implementation Meeting.



EUROPEAN UNION

6. We highly appreciate the contribution of the Parliamentary Assembly to **election observation**, since the implementation of election related OSCE commitments and upholding of international standards is an indispensable component of our democratic societies. In this regard, the EU reiterates its strong support for ODIHR's methodology in observing elections, as a gold standard that is internationally recognized, and the independent, impartial and professional manner in which it is implemented by the Parliamentary Assembly, in partnership with ODIHR.

7. We welcome the PA's acknowledgement that "there cannot be security without involvement of the women" and your call for greater women empowerment. In this regard, we hope that you will profit from synergies with the Albanian Chairmanship, whose purpose is to prioritize "action on combating **violence against women**" and **the promotion of the role of women in peace and security**. The findings of the OSCE-led survey on the well-being and safety of women in the OSCE area are alarming and we need to follow up on its recommendations. Furthermore, the 20th anniversary this year of UNSCR 1325 (2000) is an opportunity to reaffirm our commitments to its full implementation and to pledge further specific actions within the OSCE. In this respect, the Luxemburg Declaration and the relevant resolutions provide a useful framework for the PA.

8. We welcome the efforts of the various PA **special representatives and committees**, such as the Ad Hoc Committee on Countering Terrorism and the one on Migration, to address specific cross-cutting issues or geographical areas that can truly benefit from parliamentary attention. We see opportunities for convergence and for enhancing shared political messages, including with regard to the incumbent OSCE Chairmanship's priorities. We appreciate concrete outcomes coming from these bodies, as the report on "Strengthening Border Security and Information Sharing in



EUROPEAN UNION

the OSCE region: a Parliamentary Oversight Exercise” released by the Committee on Countering Terrorism last October.

9. We support your endeavours for building up **parliamentary relations with our Mediterranean** Partners, as we share the view that stronger ties among Parliaments from both sides of the Mediterranean Sea are necessary to address security in the OSCE area. We also take positive note of the first PA OSCE visit to Egypt aimed at building trust and better understanding the realities on the ground of our Partner. This is another indication of the particular attention the Parliamentary Assembly dedicates to the Mediterranean. We also appreciate your intention of exploiting opportunities to similar engage with the Asian Partners for Cooperation.
10. The EU concurs with you that **multilateralism** is an essential instrument to build bridges and realize a vision of a secure and free OSCE region, based on the respect of our common principles and commitments. The readiness of two EU Member States, Sweden and Poland, to assume the responsibility of chairing the OSCE in 2021 and 2022 is another evidence of our continued endeavors and support for multilateralism, which is a cornerstone of the EU’s external policy. As per the Council Conclusion adopted last June, the EU fully acknowledges that, to ensure peace, security, human rights, prosperity and sustainable development for all, we depend on a rules-based international order and need commonly agreed rules, as well as effective and inclusive international institutions. Today, the need to promote multilateral solutions to our common challenges is more urgent than ever.
11. Against this background, the EU recognizes the role played by parliamentary diplomacy in strengthening international security and co-operation. We highly value the concrete contribution that the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly and its members can offer to a deeper implementation of OSCE principles and commitments, as well as to the promotion and achievement of common goals.



EUROPEAN UNION

12. In conclusion, President Tsereteli, since today could be the last time you address this Council in your current position, we would like to sincerely thank for your able leadership and continuous commitment aimed at reinforcing our Organization and its common principles. At the same time, we are pleased to warmly welcome Ambassador Miodrag Pančeski, as new OSCE PA Chief Diplomatic Advisor in Vienna Liaison Office.

13. We hope that both the **Winter Meeting to be held in Vienna on 20-21 February 2020** and the Annual Session in Vancouver next July will be fruitful and assure you that the EU will continue to make the best use of occasions for effective cooperation between the parliamentary and the intergovernmental dimensions of the OSCE.

The Candidate Countries REPUBLIC of NORTH MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO* 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 and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.