



## EUROPEAN UNION

### OSCE Permanent Council No. 1321 Vienna, 24 June 2021

#### EU Statement on the Report by the OSCE Project Coordinator in Ukraine

The European Union warmly welcomes Ambassador Henrik Villadsen to the Permanent Council and reiterates its firm support for the OSCE Project Co-ordinator in Ukraine. We thank you for your report and for all the work that your mission has carried out since your last report in November 2020. We highly value your persistent support to the reform process in Ukraine and regret that your efforts are at times overshadowed by the ongoing conflict in eastern Ukraine, which is a consequence of acts of aggression by the Russian armed forces.

The COVID-19 pandemic has been a challenge for your programme activities across all dimensions. However, we are glad to hear that, thanks to your mitigating measures and the high level of flexibility and adaptability of your staff, the PCU was able to carry on with most of your planned activities, achieving an outstanding implementation rate of 95%.

The EU welcomes the PCU's continued engagement in the field of democratisation and good governance. In particular, we would like to thank the PCU for your assistance to the Central Election Commission and for co-organising a conference on the lessons learned from the local elections last year.

We also note your efforts in support of Ukraine's decentralisation reform, be it by helping with a database on newly-established local communities, developing a training syllabus for local self-government representatives or by stimulating local journalists' interest in relation to these crucial reforms.

Equally, we highly value PCU's activities aimed at promoting a culture of dialogue in Ukraine. We are glad to read that in the reporting period the PCU trained 280 reform

managers and civil servants in dialogue skills. Your contribution to the elaboration, within the Ministry of Health, of the Concept of eHealth Development deserves to be highlighted as a very timely initiative.

The EU is pleased to hear about your support to constitutional and judicial reforms, including through trainings on rule of law and human rights. We welcome the PCU's work on access to justice in conflict-affected areas and, in particular, efforts to protect children's rights in court proceedings.

The EU commends the PCU for the development of an action plan on the implementation of its strategy for the promotion of gender equality in the years 2020-2022. It is essential to operationalise the strategy through concrete deliverables. We are also pleased about the creation within the PCU of the Gender Focal Points Groups and about the important role of gender-related topics in the PCU's outreach and publicity work.

Ambassador Villadsen, we also thank you for the focus in your activities on youth. We fully agree that young people are strategic, creative, and enthusiastic agents of change contributing to a comprehensive security approach and it is important to engage with them.

The EU also notes with satisfaction the promotion by the PCU of the use of environmentally friendly practices and the incorporation of a sustainable approach to project implementation. We congratulate the PCU "Green Team" on receiving the OSCE Organisational Level Reward for these efforts, which are beneficial not only from the efficacy point of view, but also in terms of PCU's and OSCE's visibility.

It is worrying that eastern Ukraine remains one of the most heavily mined regions in the world. While acknowledging the significant efforts of Ukrainian authorities in this field, we welcome the continued support that the PCU has been providing in this area, including training on mine actions standards and of raising awareness on mine threats.

Countering illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons is another important endeavour, in particular in the context of the conflict in eastern Ukraine. In this regard, we commend PCU's current efforts and encourage it to further continue its activities with Ukrainian authorities in this highly important area.

We encourage the Ukrainian government to fully draw on the PCU's expertise and potential. We underline again the importance of continued close coordination between the PCU, the SMM and the OSCE autonomous institutions including the High Commissioner on National Minorities, as well as civil society representatives and other actors, to achieve the greatest possible impact on the ground.

The EU stands ready to cooperate closely with the OSCE and other international actors on the ground in supporting reforms in Ukraine. We look forward to the Ukraine Reform Conference to be held on 7-8 July in Vilnius.

The EU thanks Ambassador Villadsen once again for his report. We underline that the PCU's continued efforts to ensure coherence between its programme activities and the OSCE's principles and commitments are highly appreciated. We wish the Project Coordinator and his team all the best in their future work.

The Candidate Countries REPUBLIC of NORTH MACEDONIA\*, MONTENEGRO\* and ALBANIA\*, 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.