



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Permanent Council No. 1413

Vienna, 2 March 2023

EU Statement in Response to the SG Report on Climate Change

1. We thank the Secretary General for this very timely thematic report on “*OSCE and climate change: progress in 2022 and prospects for the future*”.
2. We all agree that the last year was extraordinarily challenging. The world was still grappling with the pandemic and its socio-economic repercussions when Russia launched its full-scale war of aggression against Ukraine, wreaking havoc in the country, killing civilians, destroying homes and civilian infrastructure, severely damaging the environment, as well endangering food and energy security worldwide.
3. Once more, the European Union calls on Russia to end its brutal and senseless war and immediately, completely and unconditionally withdraw all of its troops and military equipment from the entire territory of Ukraine within its internationally recognised borders.
4. Russia’s war of aggression against Ukraine is also distracting from joint efforts to address one of the most significant global challenges of our time: the climate crisis. Climate change proves to be a threat multiplier, as 2022 was a year marred by extreme weather events with severe floods and droughts in many parts of the OSCE region and all over the globe, and its impacts are only expected to become more severe. But let us be clear at the same time: Russia’s war of aggression against Ukraine, resulting also in environmental degradation with severe consequences on European energy security, has not weakened

our resolve to limit global warming to 1.5°C and make the EU climate neutral by 2050.

5. Secretary General, we agree with your assessment that the OSCE, based on its 2021 Stockholm decision, continues to provide a valuable platform for dialogue on climate change and its possible implications for security. In particular, we note the keen interest of our Mediterranean and Asian partners in cooperating with the OSCE and its participating States on issues related to climate change. We appreciate the side event organised by the Secretariat at the Ministerial Council in Łódź, which put a spotlight on mountainous areas as regions within the OSCE that are especially vulnerable to climate change.
6. We therefore commend the progress made by the OSCE project on climate change and security: *“Strengthening Responses to Security Risks from Climate Change”*, which is financially supported by many EU member states. We appreciate the pilot project on forest governance and illegal logging in the Shar Mountains/Korab Massif area in the Western Balkans, the support of cross-border wildfire management in the Southern Caucasus and the launch of a regional consultation process on climate change and security in Central Asia. Here, we also see great potential for synergies with the forthcoming EU Team Europe Initiative on Water, Energy and Climate Change. We welcome the expert analysis on the impact of the war against Ukraine on climate security and action and the newly devised project on *“Mitigating Climate Change Threats to Critical Energy Infrastructure”* and we look forward to learning more about the results.
7. We also support your awareness-raising and capacity building activities, including with civil society, youth and the private sector as well as paying particular attention to the needs of women and their active involvement in this work. We highly appreciate the active support of the OSCE field missions and the Aarhus-Centres in this regard.
8. Secretary General, the European Union endorses all five conclusions and prospects listed in your report on how to advance the OSCE’s work on climate change. We are therefore also very much looking forward to convening soon

for the OSCE High-Level Conference on Climate Change, which you have proposed. The European Union welcomes this opportunity to continue supporting your excellent work as well as the OCEEA's activities on climate change and to further shaping climate change action within the OSCE.

The Candidate Countries NORTH MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO*, ALBANIA*, UKRAINE, the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA, and BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA*, the Potential Candidate Country GEORGIA, and the EFTA countries ICELAND, LIECHTENSTEIN, members of the European Economic Area, as well as ANDORRA, MONACO and SAN MARINO align themselves with this statement.

* North Macedonia, Montenegro, Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.