



EUROPEAN UNION

**OSCE Permanent Council No. 1351
Vienna, 20 January 2022**

**EU Statement in response to the Deputy Prime Minister and
Minister of Foreign Affairs of Kazakhstan Mukhtar Tileuberdi**

1. The European Union welcomes Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Kazakhstan Mukhtar Tileuberdi and thanks him for his address. We regret that peaceful protests in early January, triggered by the increase in gas prices, eventually resulted in unprecedented violence. We deeply regret the loss of so many lives that ensued and strongly condemn the widespread acts of violence. We call for a full, impartial and transparent investigation into the events and their handling by the authorities.
2. The European Union also calls on the Kazakh authorities to protect the fundamental right to peaceful assembly, to respect proportionality in the use of force when defending the state's legitimate security interests and uphold its international obligations and OSCE commitments. These include that live ammunition and lethal force against civilians may only be used in exceptional circumstances and as a last resort. Regarding the people being detained following the events, we call on the authorities to abide by due process of law and to monitor the detention facilities so as to ensure that no human rights violations occur in these facilities.
3. We recall that unhindered access to information and communication technology plays a particularly important role in times of crisis and amidst a global pandemic. We urge Kazakhstan authorities to uphold their commitments regarding freedom of expression, freedom of the media and safety of journalists. In this context, we

recall the important role played by the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media.

4. We have already expressed our readiness to provide assistance for the peaceful resolution of the situation and we continue to encourage inclusive and meaningful dialogue with all stakeholders. The EU also welcomes the prompt reaction by the Polish OSCE Chairman-in-Office and fully supports his offer for assistance and support to the authorities and people of Kazakhstan in continuing political reforms in full respect of Kazakhstan's OSCE commitments.
5. Kazakhstan has shown positive signs in moving towards a more open and accountable governance in recent years, including through the implementation of four packages of political reforms. The European Union supports this agenda and encourages its effective implementation. It is important that political and social-economic reforms and democratization continue. Promoting good governance, the rule of law, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms will benefit the population as well as Kazakhstan as a whole. The ongoing measures to eradicate torture and improve detention conditions in prison are an encouraging step. Towards these efforts, the EU supports fruitful dialogue and cooperation with the OSCE Programme Office in Nur-Sultan.
6. The EU welcomes the abolition of the death penalty in Kazakhstan. The complete exclusion of capital punishment from Kazakhstan's criminal code, following last year's ratification of the UN second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, is an important and encouraging step. We call on all OSCE participating States and partner countries to follow the global and universal trend towards the abolition of the death penalty and not to reintroduce capital punishment, once it has been suspended or abolished.
7. Kazakhstan is an important partner for the European Union and for the stability of the region. In the framework of the EU-Kazakhstan Enhanced Partnership and Cooperation Agreement, we stand ready to advance EU-Kazakhstan relations more broadly and to continue to support Kazakhstan's reform and modernisation

processes, as well as democracy, rule of law, human rights, stability and inclusivity in the country for the benefit of all its people.

8. In conclusion, we thank once again Deputy Prime Minister Tileuberdi for being with us here today and wish him well in his future efforts.

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 and ANDORRA align themselves with this statement.

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