



## EUROPEAN UNION

### OSCE Permanent Council No. 1355 Vienna, 17 February 2022

#### EU Statement in Response to the SG Report on Climate Change

1. We thank the Secretary General for the very timely thematic report on “*Stepping up the OSCE efforts to address challenges caused by climate change*”.
2. We all agree that the OSCE has an important complementary role to play in support of the UN-led processes on climate change. In this context, the Stockholm Ministerial decision in the field of climate change is highly relevant. Although previous decisions and declarations already include commitments in this field, this is the first decision, which specifically addresses climate change and its related security challenges. It will therefore lend additional strong support to the already existing work of OCEEA on climate change.
3. As you recall in your thematic report, the decision states that the effects of climate change can exacerbate economic challenges and environmental degradation, which may negatively affect prosperity, stability and security in the OSCE area.
4. The EU is convinced that climate change is one of the most significant global challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The consequences of climate change, such as rising temperatures and sea levels and more frequent and intense extreme weather events, including the unpredictability of rainfall, multiply the impact of other factors driving instability, decline of prosperity and potentially conflict. The pathways through which climate change exacerbates these developments are complex and often depend on context. As an organization dedicated to cooperation on security issues following a comprehensive

approach, the OSCE is well placed to address the implications of climate change on security.

5. Secretary General, as you rightly point out, the Stockholm Ministerial decision also reflects the conviction that shared climate challenges can turn into opportunities to strengthen cooperation, promote good neighbourly relations and foster sustainable economic growth. In this vein, the EU is determined to harness the efforts on the Covid-19 recovery to also build greener, climate-neutral and more resilient economies.
6. We stand ready to actively promote and further develop the various activities of the OSCE on climate change. We welcome your suggestion to increase the support for existing OSCE projects and initiatives. We also recall the importance of the OSCE Aarhus Centres, 60 of which already operate in 14 participating States and enable civil society engagement on issues related to the environment and climate change. We also particularly agree that further cooperation on raising awareness, joint development of OSCE early-warning mechanisms, risk analysis, and disaster risk reduction and management, will be crucial for our joint endeavour and success.
7. Climate change is also an area of common interest with the OSCE Partners for Co-operation, as risks and challenges stemming from climate change are shared across our regions, in particular within the Mediterranean. While reaffirming the valuable role of the OSCE as a regional platform for dialogue and cooperation with our Partners for Cooperation, we would like to encourage their active involvement, as appropriate, in relevant activities and initiatives. We are convinced that working together can turn climate and environmental challenges into major opportunities for sustainable development, contributing to a just and inclusive green transition and spurring sustainable long-term socio-economic recovery and job creation.
8. We are interested in learning more on how you and OCEEA envision a multi-stakeholder process in the OSCE in the field of climate change, with civil society, including women's and youth organisations, and the private sector

and, also, on how cooperation with other international organisations active in the field of climate and security could be enhanced.

9. Let me conclude by underlining that we very much look forward to the OSCE High-Level Conference on Climate Change you will be convening on 25 March here in Vienna. You can rest assured of our active participation and constructive contribution.

The Candidate Countries TURKEY, 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, LIECHTENSTEIN and NORWAY, 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.