



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Permanent Council No. 1373 Vienna, 12 May 2022

EU Statement in response to the report by the Coordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities Ambassador Igli Hasani

1. The European Union warmly welcomes the Coordinator of Economic and Environmental Activities, Ambassador Igli Hasani, to the Permanent Council and thanks him for his report. Ambassador Hasani, your remarks have illustrated very well the significance of economic and environmental issues for the stability and security of the OSCE area, including Ukraine, in particular. In the face of Russia's premeditated, unprovoked, unjustified and illegal war of aggression against Ukraine and its people, it is crucial that the OSCE and the Office of Economic and Environmental Activities assess, address and alleviate the devastating impact of this war on the environment and the economy of Ukraine.
2. Each day brings new reports of the Russian military destroying Ukraine's environment and infrastructure with bombs and other powerful weapons, disrupting food production and logistical chains and fueling food insecurity. This also causes pollution of groundwater and surface water as well as deteriorating water access for the Ukrainian population. Forest fires caused by Russian missiles in the vicinity of nuclear sites, particularly the Chernobyl nuclear facility, have caused radioactive material to enter the atmosphere.
3. In this regard, we commend the OCEEA for collecting information on environmental threats and hazards resulting from Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine. Due to its expertise and its mandate, the OSCE is also well-positioned to strengthen disaster risk management, support water resource

management, contribute to ensuring food security, foster energy security and develop sustainable and resilient post-conflict reconstruction action plans in Ukraine. The European Union supports these efforts and the adaptation of your Office's work following the Secretary-General's "whole of OSCE approach" call. Ambassador Hasani, as you pointed out in your report, we have to remember that water and air have no borders and that the environmental damage inflicted by Russia clearly poses risks to the environment, human health, and security not just in Ukraine but also for the wider region.

4. We also support your suggested approach towards the Ukrainian displaced population with regard to assessing employment needs and promoting tertiary education and labour market placement. As you know, the EU Member States have been providing shelter to those fleeing the war, as well as granting refugees access to education and the labour market.
5. We look favourably on your work to foster good economic governance and tackle corruption and the attention you pay to promoting sustainable economic growth and development and building resilient and inclusive societies across the OSCE region, including through fostering connectivity, facilitating transport and trade, promoting effective migration governance and advancing women's economic empowerment.
6. We welcome your commitment to assist participating States with the implementation of the Stockholm Ministerial decision in the field of climate change. We stand ready to actively promote and further develop the various activities of the OSCE that address climate change and its security challenges, including cooperation on raising awareness, joint development of OSCE early-warning mechanisms, risk analysis, and disaster risk reduction and management, which are crucial for our joint endeavour and success. Consequently, we appreciate your support to the Secretary General in organising and ultimately rescheduling the High-Level Conference on climate change to continue the process initiated by the relevant Stockholm MC Decision.
7. We equally appreciate your focus on security risks related to the environment.

In this context, we welcome your office's activities to promoting good environmental governance, inter alia by supporting the multi-stakeholder approach of Aarhus Centres, and addressing topics such as transboundary water cooperation, wildfire risk management and the sound management of hazardous waste.

8. We also support your efforts to address the impact of the crisis in Afghanistan on energy security and energy co-operation in the Central Asian region, which is facing particular security risks, as well as economic and environmental challenges that should continue to be addressed in OSCE fora and by concrete OSCE projects for the region. In this context, we welcome that OCEEA is actively contributing to the Afghanistan Response Task Force established by the Secretary General. Equally important in the field of energy is the development of sustainable and renewable energy and the protection of critical energy infrastructure from natural and man-made disasters. We fully share your assessment of the importance to promote opportunities for women in sustainable energy through mentoring, vocational training and field trips and welcome the work carried out by your Office in this area.
9. We further welcome your commitment to gender equality through full and comprehensive mainstreaming of gender across all activities of the Office. We are convinced that incorporating a gender perspective in all OSCE activities is an essential component of a comprehensive approach to security. We thank you for focusing on synergies and avoiding duplications. Joining efforts and coordinating activities among OSCE structures and with other international and regional organisations is key to delivering better results. We equally appreciate your goal and encourage you to establish closer co-operation with and support for the field operations.
10. In conclusion, we assure you of our continued support for taking full advantage of the second dimension as a platform for dialogue and co-operation to address common threats to security and promote peace, in line with OSCE principles and commitments and international obligations.
11. We thank the Office of the Coordinator of the Economic and Environmental

Activities for the valuable work at this crucial time and we are looking forward to continuing our good cooperation.

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, 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.