



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Permanent Council No. 1377 Vienna, 9 June 2022

EU Statement in response to the Address by the Secretary General of the Council of Europe, Ms. Marija Pejčinović Burić

1. The European Union warmly welcomes to the Permanent Council the Secretary General of the Council of Europe, Ms. Marija Pejčinović Burić.
2. Madame Secretary General, Russia's unprovoked, unjustified and illegal war of aggression against Ukraine, which we strongly condemn, has had a dramatic impact on both the Council of Europe and the OSCE. In this context, we welcome the Committee of Ministers decision in May of this year to review the Council of Europe's priorities in light of the multifaceted repercussions of Russia's war for the European continent and beyond.
3. We strongly support the Council of Europe's work in support of Ukraine. We welcome your recent visit to Ukraine, Madame Secretary General, and strongly support the intention to re-establish the Council of Europe's field office there. We also welcome the update of the Action Plan for Ukraine and the ongoing efforts to support the work of the Prosecutor General of Ukraine. The role of the Council of Europe is indispensable in the current situation, as it will be during the reconstruction phase in Ukraine.
4. We welcome the active dialogue and practical cooperation between the OSCE and the Council of Europe. We believe that there is considerable complementarity between the work of the OSCE and the Council of Europe. Safeguarding democratic institutions, the rule of law and human rights, including media freedom, are prerequisites for lasting

security and a return to peace on our continent. We should continue to work together to ensure media freedom, including the safety of journalists and other media actors, and to enable proper working conditions for civil society, whose role in protecting human rights and democracy is vital, as well as to combat all forms of gender-based violence.

5. Madame Secretary General, due to Russia's aggression in Ukraine, the Committee of Ministers decided first to suspend Russia's rights of representation, and later to cease its membership of the Organisation entirely. Russia bears full responsibility for its aggression against Ukraine and all its consequences. We share your assessment, as stated in your most recent annual report *Moving Forward*, that Russia's actions "cannot be reconciled with membership of the Council of Europe". With its unprovoked and unjustified aggression against Ukraine, a fellow member State of the Council of Europe, Russia violated the fundamental principles of the CoE Statute, the UN Charter and international law, including OSCE principles and commitments. We regret that Russia has failed to heed our repeated calls to cease its military operations in Ukraine immediately and unconditionally and respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine within its internationally recognised borders.
6. Madame Secretary General, we share your regret that the Russian people will again suffer from the consequences of their government's actions. As a result of Russia's aggression, Russian citizens will no longer benefit from the protections granted by the European Convention on Human Rights, as of 16 September 2022. This is highly concerning as it further worsens the already dire human rights situation in Russia. We are even more concerned by the latest decision of the Duma, not to implement ECHR decisions taken after 16. March 2022 which is a blatant contradiction of Russia's obligations under international law. Russia will remain obliged to execute judgments also after September 2022.
7. The European Union strongly supports human rights defenders, democratic forces, free media and independent civil society in Russia. We urge Russia to rapidly return to compliance with human rights, international law and international humanitarian law.
8. Madame Secretary General, the EU intends to further strengthen its long-standing cooperation with the Council of Europe, which plays a crucial standard-setting role in the fields of human rights, democracy and the rule of law. The EU reaffirms its

commitment to accede to the European Convention on Human Rights, with the objective of reinforcing the common values of the Union and enhancing the coherence of human rights protection in Europe. We also commend the indispensable work of the European Court of Human Rights, and call for the full execution of the Court's Judgments by all CoE Member States.

9. In concluding, the EU looks forward to continuing the close cooperation between the OSCE and the Council of Europe and we wish you, Ms. Pejčinović Burić, every success in the exercise of your mandate. The EU takes the opportunity to thank the Italian Chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe and wish the very best to Ireland, which has recently assumed its Presidency.

The Candidate Countries REPUBLIC of NORTH MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO* 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, MONACO 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.