



## **EUROPEAN UNION**

### **OSCE Permanent Council No. 1379 Vienna**

#### **EU Statement on the Report by the Head of the OSCE Programme Office in Nur-Sultan, Amb. Frob Barth**

1. The European Union warmly welcomes Ambassador Frob Barth to the Permanent Council and thanks him for his comprehensive report.
2. We appreciate the Programme Office's achievements, especially against the backdrop of Russia's unjustified and illegal war of aggression against Ukraine, which has significant negative consequences also for the societies and economies of Central Asian countries. We take positive note of the good cooperation between the Programme Office and the host authorities and civil society, including the high-level meetings. In this regard, we welcome the visit of the Polish OSCE Chairman-in-Office to Kazakhstan on 1 and 2 June.
3. We value the Office's contribution to the advancement of the host country's development plans and implementation of the OSCE commitments, as well as the regional engagement and longstanding cooperation with local partners, including with civil society, media, academia, and the private sector. We equally appreciate that the programmatic activities often include a gender perspective and lay focus on engaging the youth.
4. In the Politico-Military Dimension, we welcome the support to the police reform and enhancement of border security through building capacities and training courses. We also appreciate activities on addressing transnational threats, including countering cybercrimes aimed against companies and citizens, as well as your engagement with law enforcement, media and civil society on issues related to countering violent extremism and radicalisation that lead to terrorism. In this

context, we welcome the importance placed on engaging with various stakeholders in this process.

5. In the Second Dimension, we welcome the continued work on combating corruption, money laundering, and terrorism financing, as well as the wildlife crime of poaching. The EU supports raising the OSCE's profile in promoting environmental and climate issues, particularly in Central Asia. In this regard, we welcome the Office's assistance to the Government's efforts on regional water management, as well as its efforts to promote the Aarhus Convention by organising roundtable discussions, and to raise awareness of Kazakhstan's new Environmental Code. We also appreciate your work on women's empowerment, including through the 4<sup>th</sup> Rural Women's Forum in November 2021.
6. In the Human Dimension, we commend the Office for continuing the promotion of human rights and fundamental freedoms, the rule of law, the support to media and internet freedom, as well as the strengthening of democratic institutions, as the core of the comprehensive security approach. We attach great importance to effective cooperation with civil society, including by conducting online capacity development workshops. We also particularly welcome the organisation of the Second National Simulation exercise in October 2021 to combat trafficking in human beings and appreciate the Office's work in the field of gender-based and domestic violence.
7. Kazakhstan has shown the intention of moving towards a more open and accountable governance, including through socio-economic reforms initiated by President Tokayev after the tragic January events. The European Union supports this agenda and encourages its effective implementation. In this regard, we welcome the abolition of the death penalty in Kazakhstan, which is an important and encouraging step. We also take note of the constitutional amendments supported by the people of Kazakhstan in the Constitutional Referendum on 5 June aimed at strengthening democratic institutions and the rule of law in the country. It is important that political and social-economic reforms and democratisation continue, including in relation to respect for freedom of association, peaceful assembly and expression. In this context, we continue to underline the need for a full and independent investigation into the violent clashes at the beginning of

January this year, as well as into reports of all human rights violations. The European Union welcomes the commitment made by Foreign Minister Tileuberdi during his visit to Brussels in January 2022 to share the results of this investigation.

8. Kazakhstan is an important and valuable partner for the European Union. On this occasion, we underline the EU Strategy on Central Asia as a valuable roadmap for the EU and Central Asia to forge a strong and durable partnership. 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. Moreover, in the framework of the EU Enhanced Partnership and Cooperation Agreement with Kazakhstan, 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, stability and inclusivity in the country.
9. In conclusion, we thank Ambassador Frobarth and his staff for their work and wish them every success.

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, the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA and GEORGIA align themselves with this statement.

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