



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Permanent Council No. 1414 Vienna, 9 March 2023

EU statement in response to the Report by the (Acting) Project Co-ordinator in Uzbekistan

1. The European Union warmly welcomes Mr. Hans-Ullrich Ihm to the Permanent Council and thanks him for the comprehensive report. Your presentation occurs at a grim time for the OSCE and the OSCE region as a whole, with Russia's unjustified and brutal war of aggression raging in Ukraine for over a year now. We condemn in the strongest possible terms Russia's illegal war of aggression against Ukraine and we reiterate our call on Russia to end this senseless war immediately.
2. We commend the Project Co-ordinator in Uzbekistan (PCUz) for the continued efforts in all three dimensions, as well as in cross-dimensional topics, and supporting the host country in implementing OSCE principles and commitments together with supporting Uzbekistan's reform priorities.
3. We appreciate the strengthened engagement of Uzbekistan with the OSCE, facilitated by the PCUz. The "New Uzbekistan's Development Strategy for 2022-2026" demonstrates Uzbekistan's commitment to reform the country, including through a number of joint projects by the PCUz with governmental authorities and civil society. The EU appreciates that most of the current Strategy's goals are in line with OSCE commitments.
4. We welcome the positive results of numerous projects and activities carried out by the PCUz and support continued activities, in particular in the area of good governance and transparency, strengthening the rule of law and law enforcement agencies, combating corruption, trafficking and financing of

terrorism, and welcome the examples of good cooperation among the PCUz and the host state mentioned in your report.

5. The PCUz's support to Uzbekistan in promoting green economy policies, environmental education and security, including the promotion of sustainable agricultural practices, is also appreciated.
6. We value the focus on promoting gender equality and women's empowerment through project activities aimed at strengthening the role of women in socio-economic life, and the support to Uzbekistan in implementing the Women, Peace and Security agenda. We welcome PCUz's support to promoting women's participation in business as well as in public and political life and capacity-building of female politicians.
7. We regret that the outstanding adoption of the OSCE's Unified Budget has negatively affected the PCUz's capacity to implement its mandate efficiently and to timely deliver project activities, with negative consequences on PCUz's staff and administrative matters. These issues should be addressed and we appeal to all participating States to keep them in mind when negotiating the budget provisions.
8. The PCUz's work needs to remain balanced across all three dimensions and in accordance with priorities set by the participating States, and maintain focus on activities where the OSCE provides impact. We underline the importance of the PCUz being present with activities in all of Uzbekistan and encourage your engagement in this respect.
9. The EU continues to support reform efforts in Uzbekistan. We attach great importance to the security, stability and prosperity of Uzbekistan and the whole region. We underline the EU Strategy on Central Asia, which focuses on promoting resilience, prosperity and regional cooperation in Central Asia. The implementation of this strategy provides a valuable opportunity for the EU and Central Asia to forge a strong and durable partnership. The promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms, rule of law, civil society, the rights of women and sustainable development, and good governance, among others, remain at the core of our relations.

10. In conclusion, the European Union thanks Mr. Hans-Ullrich Ihm and his team for their valuable work and wish them every success.

The Candidate Countries NORTH MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO*, SERBIA*, ALBANIA*, UKRAINE, the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA, and BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA*, the Potential Candidate Country GEORGIA, and the EFTA countries ICELAND and LIECHTENSTEIN, members of the European Economic Area align themselves with this statement.

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