



**EUROPEAN UNION**

**OSCE Permanent Council No. 1459  
Vienna, 1 February 2024**

**EU Statement in response to the  
Address by the President of the Committee of Ministers of the  
Council of Europe, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Education and  
Sport of Liechtenstein, H.E. Ms. Dominique Hasler**

1. The European Union warmly welcomes to the Permanent Council the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Education and Sport of Liechtenstein, H.E. Ms. Dominique Hasler.
2. We strongly support the programme of the Liechtenstein Presidency of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe (CoE), including its priorities encompassing values towards an inclusive and sustainable future. The Presidency has an important task in setting the organisation down the path of implementing its first programme and budget post-Reykjavik.
3. We highly appreciate the important work of the CoE in supporting Ukraine and underline the importance of continuing this work. Supporting the strengthening of respect, protection and fulfilment of human rights, democracy and the rule of law to align them with European standards is also important in aiding Ukraine in its path towards EU accession. We reiterate that Ukraine belongs to our European family.
4. The EU is proud to be at the forefront of advancing all measures, also within the OSCE and CoE, to ensure accountability for all violations of international law, including international human rights law and international humanitarian law in connection with Russia's illegal, unprovoked and unjustified war of aggression against Ukraine, including for the crime of aggression. It is important to continue focusing on supporting Ukraine through all means possible.
5. Madame Minister, we welcome your focus on the Register of Damage for Ukraine, and underline its importance as a significant practical step towards accountability through an international compensation mechanism and reparations. We hope that all CoE member states and beyond will join this initiative.

6. Russia bears full responsibility for its war of aggression against Ukraine and all its consequences. With its illegal, unprovoked and unjustifiable war of aggression against Ukraine, Russia blatantly violates the fundamental principles of the CoE Statute, OSCE principles and commitments, and international law, including the UN Charter.
7. Madame Minister, we regret that the Russian people bear the consequences of their government's actions. As a result of Russia's ongoing war of aggression against Ukraine, Russian citizens no longer benefit from the protections granted by the European Convention on Human Rights. This is highly alarming as it further worsens the already dire human rights situation in Russia. We reiterate that Russia remains obliged to execute the judgments of the European Court of Human Rights related to the cases brought before it until September 2022. We urge Russia to rapidly ensure full compliance with international law, including international human rights law and international humanitarian law.
8. We underline the crucial role civil society organisations, human rights defenders and a free and independent media play in ensuring accountability and the functioning and development of vibrant democracies. We have seen how Russia's external aggression, supported by Belarus, is mirrored by a systematic and intensified internal repression. In this regard, we also wish to commend CoE for your cooperation with and support for the Belarusian and Russian democratic forces and civil society.
9. The year 2024 will witness several significant elections and we wish to highlight the importance of election observation missions. In this regard, we deeply regret that Belarusian and Russian authorities failed to invite ODIHR to observe Belarus' parliamentary and local elections and the Russian presidential elections, in complete disregard of their OSCE commitments.
10. Madame Minister, the EU intends to further strengthen its long-standing cooperation with the CoE, which plays a crucial standard-setting role in the fields of human rights, democracy and the rule of law. We 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. We acknowledge the increasing significance of the ECHR in conflict situations, through its interim measures and judgements in inter-state cases. EU's accession to the Convention on preventing and combating violence against

women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention) was an important milestone. The EU reaffirms its commitment to accede to the European Convention on Human Rights, with the objective of further reinforcing the common values of the Union and enhancing the coherence of human rights protection in Europe.

11. We welcome and reiterate our support to the active dialogue and cooperation between the OSCE and the CoE. We believe that there is considerable complementarity between the work of both organisations, particularly on the ground. As our multilateral system of co-operation is under challenge, it is vital for the security of Europe that our organisations co-operate in order to support each other's strengths. While we acknowledge the continued relevance of the four identified priority areas, we believe there is scope for further broadening our cooperation, particularly between OSCE field operations and CoE offices on the ground. We should continue to work together to ensure space for civil society and human rights defenders, the safety of journalists and media actors, as well as to combat all forms of gender-based violence.
12. This year will mark the 75th anniversary of the CoE – an occasion to celebrate and raise awareness of the organization's positive impact on people's daily lives, and to highlight the joint efforts of its member states in promoting and implementing shared values and standards. We agree with you, Madame Minister, that our common goals and values should guide us towards a more inclusive and united future.
13. In concluding, the EU looks forward to continued close cooperation between the OSCE and the CoE and we wish Liechtenstein and you, Minister Hasler, the best of success during your Presidency.
14. The EU also takes the opportunity to thank Latvia as the previous Chair of the Committee of Ministers of the CoE.

The Candidate Countries NORTH MACEDONIA\*, MONTENEGRO\*, ALBANIA\*, UKRAINE, the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA, and BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA\*, the EFTA country ICELAND, member of the European Economic Area, as well as ANDORRA, MONACO and SAN MARINO align themselves with this statement.

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