

**EUROPEAN UNION****OSCE Permanent Council No 1055  
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**EU statement in Response to the Report of the Head of the  
OSCE Centre in Ashgabat, H.E. Ambassador Ivo Petrov**

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The European Union and its Member States warmly welcome Ambassador Ivo Petrov to the Permanent Council and thank him for his comprehensive report.

The OSCE Centre in Ashgabat plays an important role in assisting Turkmenistan implement key reforms. It can effectively respond to changes on the ground and focus on areas where the OSCE has a recognized expertise and added value.

The EU enjoys good cooperation with Turkmenistan in particular in the areas of energy and trade and looks forward to upgrading the institutional framework of EU-Turkmenistan relations with a Partnership and Cooperation Agreement. We encourage Turkmenistan to further actively engage in EU regional cooperation programmes and political dialogues, and notably in the High Level EU-Central Asia Security Dialogue.

The EU reiterates its commitment to support Turkmenistan in its democratic and socio-economic reform process, including through bilateral and regional cooperation programs and development cooperation, as well as giving new impetus to our political, trade and energy cooperation.

The EU welcomes the enhanced interaction between the OSCE Centre in Ashgabat and the Government of Turkmenistan, and encourages further deepening of cooperation in all three dimensions. Turkmenistan and the EU continue to share a common aim to promote a stable, secure and prosperous region, particularly in the aftermath of the ISAF withdrawal from Afghanistan. We value Turkmenistan's role in achieving this aim, including through the OSCE.

In the Politico-Military Dimension, we therefore commend the focus of the Centre on activities in the area of border security and management. In this regard, we welcome the project at the Imamnazar crossing point at the Turkmen-Afghan border aimed at

strengthening the capacities of border service of Turkmenistan. The EU also commends the Centre's activities in support of Turkmenistan's efforts in combating trafficking in drugs and chemical, biological and radiological substances. In that field, we encourage coordination and synergies with the EU programmes of border management (BOMCA) and drug action programme (CADAP) in Central Asia.

In the Second Dimension, we welcome the continuation of activities of the Centre in the area of good governance, with a focus on combating corruption and money laundering. We commend that the Good Governance Resource Centre within the Ministry of Finance proved to be a reliable partner of the OSCE Centre in developing activities in this area. We encourage Turkmenistan to persevere on the path of reforms, and to strengthen good governance. Furthermore, we welcome the Centre's activities related to energy.

Within the Human Dimension, we welcome the Centre's continued engagement on penal reform and hope this will lead to concrete positive results. We also support the Centre's activities towards promoting OSCE principles and commitments in the area of human rights, specifically in the area of rule of law, preventing human trafficking, combating domestic violence, gender equality, and freedom of religion and belief. In that field, we encourage coordination and synergies with the EU Rule of Law Platform in Central Asia, also active in Turkmenistan notably on the proposed constitutional reform and Ombudsman.

We would also like to highlight the activities organized by the Centre with ODIHR to support the efforts of the host Government in further improving its election system, and we hope the recommendations provided by ODIHR experts following the parliamentary elections held in Turkmenistan in December 2013 will be fully implemented.

With regard to media freedom, we welcome the work of the Centre to raise awareness in the area of online media, to develop education for journalists, as well as to support the efforts of the authorities in the process of drafting legislation. However, we remain worried by the continuous limitation of the freedom of the media and we urge the Turkmen authorities not to limit the free access to information to their citizens.

The EU remains concerned about the many shortcomings concerning respect for

human rights and fundamental freedoms in Turkmenistan. There is still a significant gap between the legislative framework and its practical implementation. We urge the Turkmen authorities to comply fully with international commitments in this regard.

We welcome the participation of Turkmen representatives at the first Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting this year and we count on their participation in the annual OSCE Human Dimension Implementation Meeting in Warsaw in order to continue to engage with civil society, including on issues such as the "Prove They Are Alive Campaign" which was highlighted at last year's meeting.

Mr Chairperson, we underline that for all field operations evaluation is essential to ensuring the efficient use of resources, and that their activities remain results oriented and add value. We encourage the Mission to focus on results and follow-up, to ensure that all activities and reporting are representative of a culture of evaluation and implementation of lessons learned. To that end, we would be grateful if Ambassador Petrov could highlight some of the key impacts of the Mission's programmatic work during the reporting period.

Finally, we would like to congratulate Ambassador Petrov for the recent extension of his appointment as Head of the Centre for another year and wish him and his able team great success in their future endeavours.

The Candidate Countries the FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA\*, MONTENEGRO\* and ALBANIA\*, and the Country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and Potential Candidate BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA align themselves with this statement.

\* The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.