



EUROPEAN UNION

**OSCE Permanent Council N°1116
Vienna, 27 October 2016**

**EU Statement in Response to the President of the OSCE
Parliamentary Assembly, Ms Christine Muttonen**

The European Union warmly welcomes the President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly Christine Muttonen to the Permanent Council. Madame President, we congratulate you with your election and we thank you for your presentation today.

Mr. Chairperson, we thank President Muttonen for the Parliamentary Assembly's contribution to the work of the OSCE. The European Union values the important role PA Members play in disseminating and implementing OSCE goals and principles, and in promoting our common commitments, notably in the area of democratic elections, human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the protection of human rights defenders and the rule of law. As members of their national Parliaments, the PA have a key role in ensuring that OSCE principles are implemented and respected in national legislation. Moreover, through dialogue across borders, members of the PA can advance confidence-building and conflict resolution in the OSCE area. In this regard we welcome the appointment of OSCE PA President Emeritus Ilkka Kanerva as the Assembly's first Special Representative on Mediation. We also strongly support the OSCE PA's longstanding commitment to the engagement of civil society in OSCE activities.

Madame President, as you outline, the organization has perhaps never been more challenged or more important. The violation of fundamental OSCE principles and sovereign borders, destabilising actions, growing threats to fundamental freedoms and human rights, the decrease in military transparency, the scourge of terrorism and violent extremism and the unprecedented migration and refugee flows confronts the OSCE with a challenging set of issues – and a

responsibility to act. It is incumbent on us to ensure that the OSCE is able to realise its potential, based on its concept of comprehensive security. While dialogue in this room is important, we also need to see progress on the ground.

Our priority remains to restore respect for the fundamental principles upon which the European security order and the OSCE are based. In this context, the EU recalls its unwavering support to the sovereignty, territorial integrity, unity and independence of Ukraine. We reiterate our strong condemnation of the illegal annexation of Crimea and Sevastopol to the Russian Federation and we will not recognise it.

The European Union welcomes the continued co-operation between the PA and ODIHR. We particularly appreciate the Parliamentary Assembly's contribution to election observation, which we believe strengthens international election observation efforts and contributes to ensuring that elections comply with OSCE commitments and international standards. We take this opportunity to reiterate our full support for ODIHR's election observation methodology and the independent, professional and impartial manner in which it is implemented by ODIHR in partnership with the Parliamentary Assembly.

Let me conclude in thanking once again the Parliamentary Assembly for its active engagement on issues related to security in the OSCE area and to enhance implementation of OSCE principles and commitments. 25 years ago, parliamentary leaders from all then CSCE participating States adopted the Madrid Declaration as a fundamental document of the OSCE PA's methods and procedures. Today, we commend the fruitful development of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly and wish to recall the statement of the Berlin Ministerial in 1991 that welcomed the establishment of the Parliamentary Assembly. Madame President, we wish you all success in your future work.

The Candidate Countries the FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF 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 and SAN MARINO align themselves with this statement.

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