



## EUROPEAN UNION

### OSCE Permanent Council No. 1424 Vienna, 25 May 2023

#### **EU Statement on the Report by the Head of the Programme Office in Bishkek and the interim Director of the OSCE Academy in Bishkek**

1. The European Union warmly welcomes Ambassador Alexey Rogov and Dr. Indira Satarkulova to the Permanent Council and thanks them both for their comprehensive reports. We value and support the work of the OSCE Programme Office in Bishkek in all three dimensions of security.
2. We appreciate the Programme Office's work and achievements despite Russia's ongoing illegal, unprovoked and unjustifiable war of aggression against Ukraine. We take positive note of the good cooperation between the Programme Office and the host authorities and civil society, including through the Consultative Mechanism and high-level meetings.
3. We recognise the Programme Office's activities in all three OSCE dimensions of security and their positive impact across the country, exemplified by initiatives like the Entrepreneurship Support Centres. The Programme Office's work has yielded tangible results, such as its assistance in expanding the Kyrgyz Coordination Centre on Cybersecurity's Incident Response Platform. The Programme Office enables civil society to help ensure the rule of law and contribute to democratic processes.
4. In addition, the EU commends the Programme Office for advancing women's participation in all aspects of comprehensive security, for instance through assisting the Kyrgyz authorities in implementing gender-related commitments within governmental structures.
5. We remain concerned, however, about the simmering tensions at the border between the Kyrgyz Republic and the Republic of Tajikistan, and we see value in

a reassessment of the outburst of violence that occurred in September. We consider the OSCE-organised meetings of senior border service representatives in Bishkek and in Vienna useful. We encourage further efforts in this direction, fostering deeper dialogue and cooperation on demarcation, as well as border- and water management.

Mr. Chair,

6. We would like to highlight the EU Strategy on Central Asia and the Global Gateway Initiative, which focus on promoting resilience, prosperity, inclusive and sustainable economic growth and regional cooperation, and is the framework for concrete cooperation projects, such as the regional Team Europe Initiatives on sustainable transport between the EU and Central Asia. The imminent signing of the Enhanced Partnership and Cooperation Agreement will elevate the collaboration between the EU and the Kyrgyz Republic to a new level. The European Union supports the Kyrgyz Republic in its progress towards democracy, the rule of law, sustainable socio-economic development, good governance, and the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.
7. In this context, the decision of the early dismissal of Kyrgyz Ombudswoman Atyr Abdrakhmatova by the Kyrgyz parliament earlier this month sends a negative signal regarding an important institution whose independence needs to be strengthened. We view the Kyrgyz Court's decision to close Radio Azattyk in late April in a context of a number of previous negative developments related to human rights and fundamental freedoms in Kyrgyzstan. We call on the Kyrgyz Republic to scrutinise the draft media law and the draft revision of the law on non-governmental organisations, actively seeking constructive advice on these drafts from ODIHR and the RFoM.
8. The EU commends the important work of the OSCE Academy and recognises its positive impact on the region's academic excellence, connectivity, cohesion, and stability. The Academy continues to be a flagship project for the OSCE. With new Bachelor and Master Programmes accredited by the Kyrgyz authorities, including the EU-funded MA Programme for Human Rights and Sustainability, the Academy is progressing towards becoming a fully-fledged regional centre for higher education and research. We applaud this impressive development, which was

initiated by the former director, Dr. Wolters. We appreciate the leadership demonstrated by him and also by the acting Director Dr. Satarkulova.

9. In conclusion, allow me to reiterate our appreciation for the successful work of the OSCE Programme Office in Bishkek, as well as of the OSCE Academy, and to wish both Ambassador Rogov and Dr. Satarkulova and their teams every success in their work.

The Candidate Countries NORTH MACEDONIA\*, MONTENEGRO\*, ALBANIA\*, 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, Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.