



**EUROPEAN UNION**

## **OSCE Permanent Council No.1568**

**Vienna, 11 June 2026**

### **EU Statement in Response to the Address by the Secretary General of the Council of Europe, Mr. Alain Berset**

The European Union warmly welcomes back to the Permanent Council the Secretary General of the Council of Europe, Mr. Alain Berset.

The Council of Europe continues to play a leading role in the promotion and protection of human rights, democracy and the rule of law in Europe. These core values remain fundamental, as we continue witnessing democratic backsliding and rising authoritarianism across our region.

Mr. Secretary General,

Since you last addressed the Permanent Council, Russia has continued its war of aggression against Ukraine and its relentless strikes on civilians and civilian infrastructure, continuing to cause immense suffering, ever-increasing casualties and destruction. The European Union supports all efforts towards achieving a just, comprehensive and lasting peace in Ukraine, grounded in the principles of the international law, the UN Charter and the Helsinki Final Act.

There can be no just and lasting peace without accountability for violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law, as well as for all crimes committed in connection with Russia's war of aggression. The Council of Europe is a key partner in this regard, through its Action Plan for Ukraine and the establishment of crucial accountability mechanisms. The membership of both the EU and the Council of Europe in the *International Coalition for the Return of Ukrainian Children* also exemplifies this partnership. The EU recently joined the Enlarged Partial Agreement on the Management

Committee of the Special Tribunal for the Crime of Aggression against Ukraine and became party to the International Claims Commission to ensure victims are compensated. The EU will continue supporting further operationalization of these two international bodies.

The EU priorities for cooperation with the Council of Europe in 2025-2027 underline the continued commitment to the effective functioning of the European human rights system. Furthermore, they reaffirm the Union's determination to accede to the European Convention on Human Rights, the cornerstone of the Council of Europe and all its activities. We call for the full execution of the judgments of the European Court of Human Rights by all OSCE participating States. In this context, we reiterate that, Russia, though no longer a party to the Convention since September 2022, must still comply with rulings on violations committed prior to its withdrawal.

We welcome and reiterate our support for the regular dialogue and active cooperation between OSCE and the Council of Europe. We take note of the discussions at the latest OSCE-Council of Europe leadership meeting in May, in Chisinau, focused on making multilateral action more effective by reinforcing complementarity, avoiding duplication and building on the respective strengths of both organisations, based on their respective and unique mandates. As democratic institutions, human rights and fundamental freedoms face numerous challenges across our region, the two organisations share a common goal in promoting stability and security on the basis of these norms and principles. We acknowledge the continued relevance of the four identified priority areas for enhanced cooperation and recognize the potential for further effective collaboration between the OSCE and the Council of Europe, where it provides added value, and in full respect of their distinct mandates.

In conclusion, the EU looks forward to continuing close cooperation with the OSCE and the Council of Europe. We would like to take this opportunity, Mr. Berset, to thank you for your leadership at the Council of Europe and wish you success in exercising your mandate.

*Albania, Andorra, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Republic of Moldova, Monaco, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Norway, San Marino, and Ukraine align themselves with this statement.*