



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Permanent Council No. 1484 Vienna, 25 July 2024

EU Statement in response to the OSCE Secretary General's Report on the OSCE's Response to the Implications of Afghanistan for the OSCE Region

1. The European Union thanks the Secretary General for the report on the *Response to the Implications of Afghanistan for the OSCE Region (RIAOR)* outlining the important work carried out by the OSCE in the past year as well as upcoming activities.
2. The OSCE – with its comprehensive concept of security and long-standing experience and presence in Central Asia – is playing a crucial role in mitigating risks, addressing vulnerabilities and pursuing opportunities related to the situation in Afghanistan.
3. The deterioration of the humanitarian situation in Afghanistan and the severe human rights violations perpetrated by the Taliban, especially violations of women's rights, are of grave concern for the European Union. Women and girls continue to be excluded from public life and denied their basic rights, including the right to education, work, and freedom of movement. The institutionalisation of large-scale and systematic gender-based discrimination by the Taliban increasingly places women and girls in Afghanistan, as well as Afghan society as a whole, in an extremely vulnerable position. These systematic and systemic violations against women and girls may amount to gender persecution, which is a crime against humanity under the Rome Statute of the ICC of which Afghanistan is a state party. The full respect for the human rights and fundamental freedoms of women and girls and their equal and meaningful participation in society are not only goals in themselves but also prerequisites for sustainable economic and political development, social cohesion, stability, and peace. The EU condemns the systematic human rights violations and abuses by the Taliban. We again urge them

to respect all human rights, especially those of women and girls, and of persons belonging to minorities, including ethnic and religious minorities, in line with the conclusions of the Council of the European Union of 20 March 2023.

4. The EU is committed to peace and stability in Afghanistan and to supporting the people of Afghanistan. A stable Afghanistan is in the interest of the international community as a whole, to prevent regional instability, counter terrorism threats, and combat illicit trafficking, including in drugs, small arms and light weapons, and trafficking in human beings.
5. The OSCE RIAOR Repository Programme offers an excellent framework to tackle in a coordinated manner, the consequences of the situation in Afghanistan for the security of the OSCE region, with a particular focus on Central Asian participating States. The European Union and its Member States support many of the 38 projects included in the Repository Programme. We welcome its extension until 2026 and the efforts undertaken to further enhance coordination and to ensure a more strategic focus.
6. Among the many initiatives, we particularly commend the continuous, excellent cooperation between the EU and the OSCE on phase II of the EU-funded project for the Stabilisation of Tajikistan's Southern Border region with Afghanistan. We welcome the capacity-building and other support provided by the OSCE to strengthen border security and management across the region. We appreciate the organisation of the meeting of Central Asian Border Commanders in Vienna in early June, and the excellent work of the Border Management Staff College in Dushanbe.
7. The EU also commends the important work of the OSCE Academy in Bishkek and recognises its positive impact on the region's academic excellence, connectivity, cohesion, and stability. We take positive note of the participation of Afghan students to the programmes of the Academy and encourage their continued enrolment, particularly of female students. We welcome the active participation of women from both Afghanistan and Central Asian participating States in the OSCE Women's Peace Leadership Programme and in the Young Women for Peace

Initiative, within the WIN project, as well as to the OCEEA's ground-breaking project on women in the energy sector. These initiatives greatly contribute to the empowerment of women and girls and ensure that the voices of women from Afghanistan are heard at the international level. We would also like to commend the work of and encourage further support to the project on assisting Women's Resource Centres in Tajikistan, which provide crucial assistance to survivors of domestic violence.

8. In conclusion, the European Union highly values the work of the OSCE in mitigating risks and addressing challenges related to the crisis in Afghanistan, particularly in neighbouring participating States. We look forward to continuing and further strengthening our cooperation for the benefit of the people of Afghanistan and the Central Asian participating States.

The Candidate Countries NORTH MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO*, SERBIA*, ALBANIA*, UKRAINE, the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA, and BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA*, the EFTA countries ICELAND, LIECHTENSTEIN and NORWAY, members of the European Economic Area, as well as ANDORRA and SAN MARINO align themselves with this statement.

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