



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Permanent Council No. 1402 Vienna, 15 December 2022

EU Statement in response to the End of Year Report by Special Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office on Combatting Corruption, Prof. Anita Ramasastry

1. The EU warmly welcomes Special Representative Professor Anita Ramasastry to the Permanent Council and thanks her for her comprehensive report. As we have heard, the risks of corruption have been exacerbated not just by the COVID-19 pandemic but also by the economic recovery measures, transition to green economy and finally, food insecurity connected to Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine. These are strong reasons why anti-corruption measures and tools should remain high on the agenda of our deliberations and a priority for the work of the OSCE to achieve economic resilience. Last week, we also celebrated the International Anti-Corruption Day. Fighting corruption demands commitment, endurance and determination. To be credible we need to start at home. There is no room for corruption in the EU or any of its institutions and decisive actions are taken against any allegations. The EU reiterates its strong commitment to the fight against corruption at all levels, as a fundamental pillar for upholding the rule of law in the OSCE area and beyond.
2. Good governance and the absence of corruption are essential prerequisites for a good investment climate and contribute to better-integrated economies that are inclusive, sustainable and that ensure social justice. Transparency and anti-corruption measures are the key to a safe and responsible recovery. Therefore, anti-corruption is an important component of the EU Recovery and Resilience Plans

funds that have built-in mechanisms to prevent any kind of fraud, corruption and conflict of interest.

3. As you know, we attach great importance to the promotion of good governance and the fight against corruption in our neighbourhood policy, as well as in the accession process to the EU. In relation to this, we appreciate your support to disseminating the OCEEA Guide on best practices on good governance that have a positive impact on the overall business climate and promote strong investment friendly environments.
4. We highly appreciate your contribution to showing best practices and encouraging cooperation in this field, including support to the projects of the Office of the Coordinator of Economic and Environmental Activities. We recognise your important contributions to conferences and seminars, namely in Albania and in Italy on the social reuse of recovered assets to affected communities and how civil society can use open data to detect cases of corruption.
5. We particularly appreciate your focus on the engagement of civil society in preventing and fighting corruption. As pointed out in your report, this has been important also in the field of environment, particularly in relation to the risks of corruption in the renewable energy sector, where a high level of transparency is crucial. In this context, we agree on the important work of the Aarhus Centres that address environmental challenges at the local level. They focus on dialogue among civil society, the private sector, and governments and guarantee that open and transparent processes are applied also to projects and activities focused on the green economy.
6. Furthermore, the EU supports the availability of data for civil society, media and investigative journalists, including in the area of the environment. The EU Members States have implemented in their national laws the EU Open Data Directive, the objective of which is to increase the amount of publicly held data available for re-use, enabling scrutiny of the work of public institutions.

7. Corruption disproportionately affects women, as well as vulnerable groups. We appreciate your activities in addressing these issues and highlighting best practices, such as examples shown by the OSCE Mission in Skopje and the Mediterranean Conference in Jordan related to how digitalisation can help remove barriers to women's economic empowerment.
8. Finally, we welcome your recommendations, particularly the need for OSCE participating States to fulfil their existing commitments for the consistent application of the UNCAC provisions, the efficient use of anti-corruption tools related to transparency, public procurement reforms and digitalisation, as well as implementation of effective anti-corruption measures in relation to recovery funds, energy security, the green economy and food security.
9. We reiterate our support for the valuable work done by the OSCE's autonomous institutions and field missions, as well as the Secretariat in this field. We would like to highlight the continuous support of the EU and its Member States to the OSCE's anti-corruption projects through extensive additional financial contributions, as well as through their expertise.

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

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