

UK responds to Kyrgyz Foreign Minister at the OSCE, 30 September 2021

Madam Chair, May I take this opportunity to thank His Excellency Ruslan Kazakbaev for his presentation and welcome him to the Permanent Council.

Kyrgyzstan is an important partner to the UK across a number of issues. As you mentioned here today, a current shared priority is action on climate change, and we look forward to continuing to work with the government as we approach COP26 in Glasgow. In the run up to this, we were pleased to hear of the newly-established State Committee on Ecology and Climate, which will play an important role in the climate change agenda in Kyrgyzstan.

We agree that the independence, autonomy and support for OSCE institutions is crucial for them to be able to discharge their essential functions and support States in meeting their OSCE commitments.

To this end, the UK welcomes the Kyrgyz Republic's willingness to work with ODIHR in its ambition to strengthen democracy and the rule of law. And we welcome the support the Government of Kyrgyzstan has given to the Programme Office in Bishkek and the continuation of this productive relationship.

We welcome the work of the Programme Office on the safety of journalists and protection of media outlets. Independent media is just one part of the democratic institutions and civil society that can contribute to healthy public debate and engagement, and so we welcome the work the Office has also done to support civil society organisations more broadly in Kyrgyzstan. We urge the government to ensure that any new legislation does not impact negatively on Kyrgyzstan's vibrant civil society.

[As I said to the Permanent Council earlier this year](#), we urge the Government of Kyrgyzstan to address the recommendations made by ODIHR and the Venice Commission in their report on constitutional reform in Kyrgyzstan. The OSCE Programme Office in Bishkek could assist in following up on these recommendations.

As a long-standing partner of Kyrgyzstan in working to achieve its ambition of stronger democracy and rule of law, the UK stands ready to support the government in meeting its related OSCE obligations. The upcoming Parliamentary elections in November present an excellent opportunity for the Government of Kyrgyzstan to demonstrate its commitment to agreed OSCE principles. And I welcome your comments here on ensuring "full and unhindered access for ODIHR."

Beyond the field mission, I am pleased that the OSCE Academy has been able to continue its operation despite the COVID-19 pandemic, and I wish the Academy every continued success.

Finally, in light of recent events in Afghanistan, we would be interested in

hearing more about how the OSCE and the Kyrgyz government might work together to strengthen regional security. Thank you once again Foreign Minister and thank you Chair