

# UK statement in response to OSCE Head of Mission visit to Montenegro

Thank you Mr Chair

The UK welcomes Ambassador Daviet to the Permanent Council. And we thank you for your Report on the Mission's activities over the last twelve months.

We support the EU statement.

The UK appreciates the activities undertaken by the Mission across a range of areas, including support for the election process, gender mainstreaming, reconciliation, media, small arms and light weapons, and transnational threats. Let me focus on these areas.

With parliamentary elections taking place later this year, early steps that take into account ODIHR's previous recommendations will be important. We appreciate that you are already providing international expertise to the State Election Commission, including on access to polling stations, enhanced voter education and taking into account a gender perspective.

We appreciate your work on youth engagement. Youth plays an important role in reconciliation. And we welcome your work to facilitate youth exchanges, including through the provision of training to secondary schools, civil society organisations and RYCO grantees. This is a valuable contribution of the Mission.

Media and safety of journalists continue to remain areas of focus. In particular we welcome the activities of the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media in providing advice and expertise on the draft media laws. We look forward to the government presenting the new laws on the media to parliament for discussion. We welcome OSCE engagement on these areas, including to strengthen media literacy among journalists and communication professionals. It is essential to ensure an independent and pluralistic media, and a climate where journalists can carry out their work without threats and without violence.

We welcome your work on gender mainstreaming. Agreement between the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, and the Ministry of Finance to pilot a gender-responsive approach to budgeting, and the development of local action plans to mainstream gender into structures, processes, policies and budgets, are positive results.

As 2020 marks the 20th anniversary of the Women, Peace and Security agenda, we welcome your engagement with international partners to support implementation of the UNSCR 1325 Action Plan in Montenegro.

We are concerned by the substantial number of small arms and light weapons in the country, and note the activity to reduce and control SALW in 2019. We recognise that you have been supporting implementation of the roadmap for a

sustainable solution to the illegal possession, misuse and trafficking of SALW in the Western Balkans by 2024. But that more needs to be done, particularly in reducing the number in citizens' possession. And to strengthen mechanisms to prevent them falling into the wrong hands.

We also appreciate the Mission's work on transnational threats. As Chair of the Security Committee, I hope there is an opportunity to demonstrate the work of your Field Mission in the Committee.

Thank you