

Report by the Head of the OSCE Programme Office in Nur-Sultan: UK response, June 2022

Thank you, Mister Chair. I would like to join other speakers in welcoming you Ambassador Frobarth back to the Permanent Council.

Kazakhstan is an important partner for the United Kingdom: our bilateral cooperation spans various fields including trade, energy, education, and security. As we celebrate the strength of our bilateral ties during this 30th anniversary year, we look forward to expanding our cooperation, working to fulfil OSCE commitments.

Ambassador Frobarth, I was pleased to read in your report of the frequent engagement you have had with other international organisations and civil society; as well as your facilitation of separate visits by ODIHR Director, Representative on Freedom of the Media, and the OSCE's Chair-in-Office. We encourage active engagement with civil society and involving a broad range of stakeholders in your work.

Mister Chair, I would like to draw attention to three areas of the report that I think deserve special attention.

First, we particularly support the work of the Programme Office on anti-money laundering, combatting terrorist financing, and anti-corruption. We welcome the OSCE-supported development of an action plan on measures to enhance legislation, develop information systems, and strengthen capacity. We look forward to hearing at a later date about the plan's implementation.

As your report recognises, anti-corruption compliance is a main tool in the prevention and the detection of corruption in government institutions. Societies with less corruption are more equitable, prosperous and so more secure.

Second, we thank the Programme Office for their work in supporting the National Human Rights Commissioner. Now that this office has constitutional status, this will be an important area to focus efforts. Also, work on strengthening the constitutional court will be key now that it has been re-established, if there is an opportunity to do so.

Third, strengthening the rule of law, including improving access to justice, discussing challenges faced by legal practitioners and judges, and sharing best practice of guaranteeing accountability and transparency in court rulings. Again, we look forward to hearing about the implementation of the resultant recommendations on how to further strengthen access to justice.

Related, we note that the report references the constitutional amendments, describing them as advancing the most important institutional and human

rights principles of the reform agenda. We hope that these amendments, along with the President's ambition for further political, judicial and economic reforms, will constitute a positive step forward in strengthening political pluralism, democracy, and human rights in Kazakhstan.

We look forward to the assessment of the referendum's assessment mission, and encourage Kazakhstan to implement any recommendations it may make.

And finally on gender equality. I was pleased to read about activity on the promotion of women's economic empowerment, women's participation in politics and decision-making, gender equality, and gender mainstreaming in the security sector. I would encourage the Programme Office to find ways to promote gender mainstreaming in every project the office undertakes.

I would like to finish by again thanking you Dr Frobarth for your presentation today. I know that my colleagues in the British Embassy in Nur Sultan are eager to partner with your Office and stand ready to support Kazakhstan in continuing its reform policies, meeting the aspirations of its people, and building security and prosperity.