



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Forum for Security Co-operation N°977 Vienna, 26 May 2021

EU Statement on Arms Control and CSBMs

The European Union and its Member States thank the Chairmanship, as well as the key-note speakers, for this useful opportunity to discuss arms control and CSBMs.

We are deeply concerned by the gradual and persistent deterioration of the security environment in the OSCE area due to recurrent violations of international law as well as breaches of OSCE principles and commitments. This trend must be reversed without delay. The EU remains ready to contribute to restoring trust and increasing mutual confidence among the participating States. To that end, we promote full implementation of the existing commitments in the politico-military area, including the Vienna Document, the Treaty on Open Skies and the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe, and, given the changes in the security environment, as well as technological and doctrinal developments in the military sphere, continue to support a substantial update and modernization of the Vienna Document, as well as further development of the Conventional Arms Control (CAC), Confidence and Security Building Measures (CSBMs) and other instruments in the politico-military area.

We welcome the steps already taken and encourage discussions on the measures proposed for improving implementation of the Vienna Document, and, in particular, enhancing military-to-military contacts both in the High-Level Military Doctrine Seminar that took place earlier this year and in the Structured Dialogue.

We also recall the proposals for updating the Vienna Document, including the Joint Proposal co-sponsored by 34 participating States, and encourage all participating States to engage in constructive discussions focused on the Vienna Document's role in reducing the risks of conflict in the OSCE area by promoting transparency, predictability and stability. In this context, we we recall the Joint Statement of 45 participating States at the Tirana Ministerial Council.

We firmly believe that the full implementation and further development of existing commitments in the pol-mil dimension is essential for enhancing military transparency and political stability in the OSCE area. Confidence and Security-Building Measures were never designed to solve conflicts; however, we believe that they certainly can reduce risk through increased transparency. Transparency depends on every participating State fully and faithfully implementing agreed CSBMs, providing accurate, reliable and timely information on its military forces and activities, honestly responding to requests for an explanation and being ready to dispel security concerns expressed by another participating State. A substantial update of the Vienna Document is also needed in this respect. We once again call on Russia to fully implement existing commitments and to reconsider its political stance with regard to the Vienna Document modernization.

We would also like to underline the valuable work undertaken in the IWG Structured Dialogue on the current and future challenges and risks to security in the OSCE area. We want to recall the ministerial commitment of all participating States in Hamburg 2016 to work towards creating an environment conducive to reinvigorating conventional arms control and Confidence and Security-Building Measures in Europe. We look forward to participating and contributing to the upcoming IWG Structured Dialogue meetings in June.

Mr. Chair, we continue to be concerned about the situation regarding the Open Skies Treaty, which serves as a vital confidence and security building measure. This situation is all the more regrettable as all States Parties to the Treaty, including the Russian Federation, have reaffirmed their support to the Treaty only a few months ago, during

the 4th Open Skies Review Conference, recognized the importance of its full implementation and agreed to discuss, in an open manner, all unresolved issues. We closely follow discussions in Russia on its participation in the Treaty, as a decision of withdrawal would effectively put at risk one of the three pillars of the conventional arms control regime.

Mr. Chair, we will continue to uphold, support, and further strengthen arms control and CSBMs, to reduce risk of conflict, increase trust among OSCE participating States and contribute to greater openness and transparency in the field of military planning and activities, particularly in the current security environment. However, it takes two to tango and within the OSCE even 57. We will remain open to a meaningful dialogue and call on all participating States to engage constructively.

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

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