



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Forum for Security Co-operation N°971 Vienna, 24 March 2021

EU Statement at the closing session of the US FSC Chairpersonship

The European Union and its Member States warmly welcome Ms. Laura Cooper to the Forum for Security Cooperation and thank her for the interesting remarks. We also wish to take this opportunity to thank you, Madam Chair, and your able team at the US Mission for the excellent cooperation in the past three months and your clear and focused choice of topics.

Madame Chair, we commend your efforts to put the focus on the Vienna Document, our main politico- military agreement on confidence and security building measures. We congratulate you, as well as Mongolia and Montenegro, for the successful conduct of the 31st Annual Implementation Assessment Meeting which provided another opportunity to examine the state of play of the Vienna Document. This annual meeting as well as the respective Security Dialogue showcased again the value of implementation of our common agreed Confidence and Security Measures.

We reiterate our support for the substantial modernisation of the Vienna Document, as well as for the further development of Conventional Arms Control, Confidence and Security Building Measures and other instruments in the politico-military toolbox that continue to be under pressure. We urge all participating States to engage in good faith in the discussions on the modernisation of the Vienna Document, taking due account of all proposals on the table, including the joint proposal supported by 34 pS. We

reiterate our position that the full implementation of the existing commitments remains essential for enhancing military transparency and political stability in the OSCE area.

Equally, we wish to recall the Ministerial commitment from Hamburg 2016 to work towards creating an environment conducive to reinvigorating arms control and Confidence and Security-Building Measures in Europe. In this regard, we value the Structured Dialogue as a meaningful, state-owned and state-driven process for in-depth exchanges on the current and future challenges and risks to security in the OSCE area and we will continue to actively support it.

We also congratulate you for the successful conduct of the High-Level Military Doctrine Seminar, which was attended at a high level by almost all pS, and addressed pertinent topics.

Madam Chair, we thank you and the Swedish OSCE Chairpersonship for the joint FSC/PC meeting earlier this month dedicated to the implementation of UNSCR 1325. We underline that gender equality which is a cross-cutting subject covering all three dimensions remains a priority for the EU within the OSCE. Looking back at the last trimester, we were pleased not only with the choice of speakers, many of whom had to wake up quite early in the morning, but also with the gender balance of panels.

We also appreciated the exchanges on challenges related to MANPADs and on projects to counter explosive hazards in Central Asia. Fostering local ownership and close cooperation between all stakeholders is vital for the effectiveness of these projects. The EU and its Member States remain strongly engaged in the fight against illicit trafficking of SALW and SCA and will continue to support initiatives in this regard as well as to invest considerable resources in this area.

Madam Chair, it is understandable that among 57 there will always be differing views and sensitivities on a number of issues, in particular in the times of increased international tensions. However, we need frank and constructive discussions among

pS on all the topics, including those one disagrees with. We appreciate your innovative scenario-based Security Dialogue and acknowledge the room for improving our free-floating discussions, in order to have more meaningful debates.

Finally, we wish to underline that the resolution of the protracted conflicts in the OSCE area remains a top priority for the European Union. In particular, Russia's acts of aggression against Ukraine and the illegal annexation of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol, continue to pose a major threat to our common security and rules-based international order. Our support to the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine within its internationally recognised borders remains unwavering. The full implementation of the Minsk agreements is the way forward for peace in eastern Ukraine. We welcome in this context the efforts of France, Germany and the OSCE as mediators within the Normandy Format and the Trilateral Contact Group respectively. We once again urge all sides, in particular the Russian Federation, to comply with the commitments that they have signed up to.

In concluding, we welcome Armenia as new FSC Chair whom we assure of our support in the next trimester.

The Candidate Countries REPUBLIC of NORTH MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO* and ALBANIA*, the EFTA countries ICELAND, LIECHTENSTEIN and NORWAY, members of the European Economic Area, as well as UKRAINE, the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA, GEORGIA, ANDORRA 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.