



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Annual Security Review Conference Vienna, 31 August – 1 September 2021

EU Statement on “Special Session: The Structured Dialogue”

FINAL DRAFT (751 words)

1. The European Union and its Member States would like to thank the Swedish Chairpersonship for organising this Special Session on the Structured Dialogue. We highly value and actively support the Structured Dialogue, which we are ready to develop further in accordance with the Hamburg Declaration, as a transparent, inclusive, state-owned and -driven confidence building process, without a predetermined outcome, which is of high relevance to the EU and the OSCE.
2. We would like to thank the Spanish Chair of the Informal Working Group, Ambassador Cuesta for his able stewardship of the Structured Dialogue for the second year in a row. We highly valued the open and inclusive manner in which Ambassador Cuesta chaired our discussions and his efforts in finding new ways to reinvigorate our discussions in the Structured Dialogue, under the motto "Understanding for Security". We welcome the continued focus of the Spanish Chair on key politico-military issues of security, as well as on current and future challenges to security in the OSCE area. This has provided us with a valuable opportunity to discuss the full and faithful implementation of existing OSCE principles and commitments. In this respect, we found the discussions at the IWG in June on the Lisbon framework and its continued relevance for European security both topical and useful, and we valued their emphasis on reflecting and sharing.

3. We continue to view the Structured Dialogue as a meaningful platform for in-depth exchanges on politico-military issues as well as on security threats and challenges of most concern to OSCE participating States, including new strategic challenges discussed in the IWG. It is important to continue best practice discussions on risk reduction measures, enhancing transparency and on practical tools and mechanisms for incident prevention and management to minimise risks and reduce escalatory potential. However, voluntary measures are not a substitute for full implementation, in letter and spirit, of existing politico-military commitments by all OSCE participating States. We underline the importance of reciprocity in this regard as well. We reiterate our openness to engage in the dialogue and hope that all participating States are ready to do the same in the spirit of mutual understanding and respect.
4. However, 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. In keeping pace with the changes in the security environment, as well as technological and doctrinal developments in the military sphere, we continue to support a substantial update and modernisation 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.
5. Confidence and Security-Building Measures were designed to prevent conflicts by reducing risks through increased transparency and military-to-military contacts. In order to build and maintain trust in the OSCE area, all participating States should provide comprehensive adequate and accurate information about their military forces and activities. Transparency is even more important in these times, as veri-

fication activities in the field of arms control and CSBMs have been, and to some extents still are, on hold due to the pandemic, which can further diminish trust among participating States. We recognize that a number of participating States have already resumed verification activities, accompanied by appropriate protective measures. We hope that this will encourage all participating States to resume verification activities without unnecessary delay.

6. We continue our commitment to engaging actively in the Structured Dialogue, which we consider a confidence building measure in itself. It is important that participating States work together towards creating an environment conducive to reinvigorating Conventional Arms Control and CSBMs, as we all agreed in the Hamburg Declaration, while remembering that the strong commitment of the OSCE participating States to full implementation and further development of arms control agreements is essential for enhancing military and political stability within the OSCE area. We would like to once again reiterate our full appreciation and support for the leadership and approach of the Spanish Chair of the Informal Working Group, and wish you the best of success for the future meetings.

The Candidate Countries REPUBLIC of NORTH MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO* and ALBANIA*, and 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.

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