



## EUROPEAN UNION

### OSCE Forum for Security Co-operation N°953 Vienna, 9 September 2020

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#### **EU Statement in response to Mr Niels Annen, Minister of State at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Germany**

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The European Union and its Member States warmly welcome H.E. Mr. Niels Annen, Minister of State at the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs, to the Forum for Security Co-operation and thank him for outlining the priorities of the German FSC Chairmanship, as well as for presenting views on the current security challenges in the OSCE area.

We would also like to use the opportunity to thank once again Ukraine for its FSC Chairmanship during the last uneasy trimester and to warmly welcome the United States as a new Troika member.

The OSCE was established as a security organisation with a broad concept of security which includes human rights and democracy. All participating States have agreed that lasting security cannot be achieved without respect for human rights and functioning democratic institutions. Although the aim of this Forum is to focus on traditional military security, furthering it by regular contact, co-operation, and sharing of military information among the participating States, we should also keep in mind the broader political environment.

The work of this Forum is of utmost importance, in particular while we continue to be confronted with blatant violations of international law and basic OSCE principles.

In this context, let us recall our well known position on Russia's acts of aggression against Ukraine and the illegal annexation of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the City of Sevastopol, which we strongly condemn and do not recognise. We remain convinced that a sustainable political solution to the conflict in eastern Ukraine can only be reached through full implementation of the Minsk agreements and we once again urge the sides to comply with the commitments they have signed

up to. We hope that the ceasefire in place since 27 July will continue to be respected despite the recent unacceptable threats by the representatives of the Russia-backed armed formations as well as incidents resulting in casualties among the Ukrainian servicemen which we deeply regret. A comprehensive ceasefire is crucial for further progress on the basis of continued international diplomatic efforts within the Normandy format and the Trilateral Contact Group, which we fully support.

We remain committed to the full implementation, in letter and spirit, of existing commitments in the politico-military dimension, which is essential for enhancing military transparency and political stability in the OSCE area. Towards this end, we continue to support the substantial modernisation of the Vienna Document, as well as the further development of Conventional Arms Control, Confidence and Security Building Measures and other instruments in the politico-military toolbox. The update and modernisation of our OSCE politico-military toolbox, most notably the Vienna Document, is vital in order to increase military stability, transparency and predictability. We urge all participating States to engage both actively and constructively in these important discussions, taking due account of all VD modernisation proposals on the table, including the joint proposal supported by 34 participating States, and reiterate that this is an open and inclusive process without a predetermined outcome.

At the same time, we want to recall the Ministerial commitment of all participating States in Hamburg 2016 to work towards creating an environment conducive to reinvigorating arms control and Confidence and Security-Building Measures in Europe. We value the Structured Dialogue as a meaningful, transparent, inclusive, 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 look forward to discussing the Structured Dialogue in the joint FSC-PC meeting in October.

Excellency, we welcome Germany's work programme for the FSC Chairmanship for the upcoming months. There is a good mix of traditional topics like UNSCR 1325, small arms and light weapons, Vienna Document and some new agenda items such as current trends in the development of military technology. New technologies present a challenge for our current arms control architecture in the OSCE. Participating States will have the opportunity to deepen their conversation on

possible approaches on this subject and we look forward to discussing this at a dedicated FSC session on 23 September.

We attach great importance to enhancing peace and security in the OSCE area by reducing the threat posed by the illicit trafficking and excessive accumulation of SALW and conventional ammunition. This is demonstrated inter alia through our support and contribution to the OSCE's assistance projects. We look forward to discussing next week the twenty years of the OSCE experience in this significant strand of our work.

We also look forward to exchanging views on the implementation of UNSCR 1325 and sharing best practices on how to achieve greater participation of women in the security sector and gender equality in the armed forces. The EU remains determined to continue to be a global leader on these issues, including in the OSCE context, especially in light of the approaching 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of UNSCR 1325.

Excellency, we would like to use this opportunity to assure you of our support in the upcoming trimester on the way to a successful Ministerial Council in December. We look forward to working with you, Ambassador Bräutigam, and your team and wish you every success.

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.