



## EUROPEAN UNION

# OSCE Forum for Security Co-operation N°997 Vienna, 19 January 2022

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### EU Statement

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The European Union and its Member States congratulate Azerbaijan on assuming the role of the FSC Chair. We warmly welcome **H.E. Mr Jeyhun Bayramov**, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan to the Forum for Security Cooperation and thank him for outlining the Chair's priorities and presenting his views on the current security challenges in the OSCE area.

We would like to use this opportunity to warmly thank the outgoing Chair, Austria, for their tremendous work during the last trimester, including in the run-up to the Ministerial Council. We also wish to bid farewell to Armenia who has left the FSC Troika and welcome Belarus as a new Troika member.

Your Excellency, Azerbaijan takes over **the helm of the FSC at a critical juncture**. Today, **Europe's security is under threat**. The resolution of all conflicts in our region in a peaceful, comprehensive and sustainable manner should remain a top priority for the OSCE, including for the FSC. **We therefore urge all stakeholders to make full use of the agreed existing formats and platforms**.

We reiterate our support to the OSCE Minsk Group and its Co-Chairs and we call on Azerbaijan and Armenia to resume the high-level political dialogue under their auspices. In this context, the EU stands committed to work closely with Armenia and Azerbaijan, aiming at sustainable peace in the region, ultimately underpinned by a comprehensive peace agreement.

Given the **concerning rhetoric** voiced with regard to the overall European security architecture not only in this forum, but also at higher political level, we agree with the Polish CiO, Minister Rau, who said last week that **the threat of major military escalation has never been this high since the end of the Cold War**.

The European Union and its Member States continue to be **ready to engage** here in the OSCE in a **genuine debate** on how to strengthen the European security

architecture in line with international law, UN obligations and the OSCE principles and commitments. **We welcome and support the Polish CiO's proposal to launch a meaningful dialogue here in the OSCE and trust in a constructive engagement by the Russian Federation.** Such a discussion must be comprehensive in content, inclusive and take into account the concerns and interests of all stakeholders. The OSCE is a privileged place for such discussions, with all sovereign States being represented here on an equal footing and with the concept of comprehensive security throughout all three dimensions as its guiding vector. The OSCE was created to deal with situations like the one we are facing these days and has instruments to address them.

**Use or the threat of use of force to change internationally recognised borders are unacceptable. The respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity** of States is a fundamental pillar of the Helsinki Final Act and **is not negotiable.** We will continue **to hold Russia accountable** for its blatant violations of international law with respect to Ukraine, Georgia and the Republic of Moldova. **We do not and will not recognise the illegal annexation** of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the City of Sevastopol.

We recall the commonly agreed principle that **every participating State has the inherent right to freely choose or change its security arrangements**, including treaties of alliance, and the principle that within the OSCE **no State can consider any part of the OSCE as its sphere of influence.**

Excellency, we take note that the topics chosen for the upcoming Security Dialogues comprise traditional subjects and some innovative ones. We hope for open, frank and constructive exchanges.

We look forward to discussing the issues related to small arms and light weapons (SALW) and mine action. We attach great importance to reducing the threat posed by the illicit trafficking and excessive accumulation of SALW and conventional ammunition.

Equally, we welcome **the inclusion of UNSCR 1325** on women, peace and security as a subject for the joint FSC-PC meeting in March. Gender equality and the WPS agenda implementation are a cross-cutting issue covering all dimensions, thus also the pol-mil one, and **remain a priority for the EU within the OSCE.**

The OSCE remains the essential platform to discuss conventional arms control in Europe. **This strand of work is more important than ever** given the current unprecedented tensions. In this vein, we look forward to exchanges on Arms Control and Confidence and Security Building Measures in the FSC and at the Annual Implementation Assessment Meeting. We believe **the full use of our instruments** to ensure an intact security architecture **remains much below its capacities and our expectations**. We reiterate in particular that **the Vienna Document needs urgently to be modernised**, as called for in the joint statement signed by 46 participating States in Stockholm. We need to **work towards creating an environment conducive to reinvigorating Conventional Arms Control and CSBM** commitments. This framework should **be implemented fully** – in letter and spirit – by all participating States. This is key for rebuilding trust and enhancing military transparency in the OSCE area. In this regard, **we highly value and actively support the Structured Dialogue** and look forward to the exchanges in the informal working group and the expert level workshop under the leadership of our Finnish colleagues on the current and future challenges and risks to security.

Excellency, we would like to use this opportunity to assure you of our support during your tenure as FSC Chair. We look forward to working with Azerbaijan's team here in Vienna and wish them every success.

The Candidate Countries the 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.

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