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EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Forum for Security Cooperation N° 860 Vienna, 6 September 2017

EU STATEMENT IN RESPONSE TO HIS EXCELLENCY IVICA DAČIĆ, FIRST DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER and MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE REPUBLIC OF SERBIA, FOR THE OPENING SESSION OF THE SERBIAN CHAIRMANSHIP OF THE FORUM FOR SECURITY AND COOPERATION

1. The European Union and its Member States warmly welcome His Excellency Ivica Dačić, First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, of the Republic of Serbia, to the Forum for Security Cooperation and thank him for outlining the schedule of work and context for the Serbian FSC Chairmanship. We also take this opportunity to thank the Russian FSC Chairmanship for its stewardship over the previous trimester.
2. We would like to thank you, Excellency, for informing us about the forthcoming Security Dialogues during your chairmanship. We look forward to discussing a number of important FSC topics, including UNSCR 1325, the OSCE Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security, Sub-Regional arms control agreements, and Conventional Arms Control and Confidence and Security Building Measures. We particularly welcome the meeting to review the implementation of OSCE assistance projects in the field of Small Arms and Light Weapons and Stockpiles of Conventional Ammunition. We see this meeting as a necessary follow-up to the 2016 Ministerial Council declaration on SALW and SCA assistance projects, which is an important area of OSCE's contribution to stability and security in the OSCE region. These topics cover a broad range of the FSC's mandate and will set the scene for the discussions leading up to the Ministerial Council.
3. The EU and its Member States believe that full implementation, revitalisation and modernisation of the existing politico-military toolbox, including the Vienna Document, remain a priority task for the

Organisation to ensure stability, transparency and predictability. During this trimester we hope that the many worthy Vienna Document Plus proposals will be comprehensively discussed in the FSC's working groups. In this context we highlight a number of proposals initiated by EU Member States, such as the French proposal on lowering the thresholds for prior notification of certain military activities, the Polish proposal on strengthening cooperation as regards hazardous incidents of a military nature, the set of German proposals related to risk reduction, compliance and verification, contacts and the exchange of military information, along with the Dutch proposal on no-notice activities and the Latvian proposal on the evaluation of the information provided under the Annual Exchange on Military Information. In parallel, we are ready to further engage with the events planned by the Austrian Chairmanship in Office, for example the Breakout Workshop on 19th and 20th October, and also the ongoing deliberations of the Informal Working Group on the Structured Dialogue. We also looked forward to consolidating the work of the Structured Dialogue at the Joint Session of the FSC and PC planned for October 31st.

4. Serbia assumes the FSC Chairmanship at a time when we continue to be confronted with a blatant violation of international law and basic OSCE principles by the Russian Federation following its illegal annexation of the Crimean peninsula and destabilising actions in eastern Ukraine. We once again urge all sides to comply with the commitments they have signed up to, as a sustainable political solution to the crisis can only be reached through full implementation of the Minsk agreements. While the 25 August ceasefire is a welcome development we are disappointed to learn of continuing violations and we therefore call on all sides to ensure full implementation of the ceasefire on the ground. Additionally we call on all sides to assure full, safe unhindered access throughout Ukraine, including to the Ukraine-Russia state border, and we condemn the intimidation and restrictions of the SMM and the repeated hampering of technical equipment.

5. Finally, Deputy Prime Minister, may we reiterate the willingness of the EU and its Member States to work energetically and collaboratively with your programme. Participating States have a collective responsibility to ensure this Forum delivers on its mandate, especially following on from the Hamburg Ministerial Council and subsequent FSC decisions. We can assure you of our full support and especially of our commitment to work towards a successful and meaningful Ministerial Council in December.

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

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