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EU statement on Working Session III – Arms Control and Confidence- and Security-Building Measures

The European Union (EU) and its Member States would like to thank the CiO and the Lithuanian FSC Chairmanship for organising the session of the Annual Security Review Conference (ASRC) on Arms Control and Confidence- and Security-Building Measures (CSBMs), which provides a useful opportunity to make an assessment of OSCE work in this area. We are especially grateful to Mr Greg Delawie, Mr Oleksandr Aleksandrovych and Dr Gerhard Jandl as key-note speakers at this third working session.

The OSCE remains a major forum for conventional arms control and for confidence-building in Europe's security architecture. The interlocking and mutually reinforcing existing web of arms control obligations and commitments is a common interest shared by all OSCE participating States, contributing to reliable cooperative security. Revitalising, updating and modernising the comprehensive acquis should contribute to charting a way towards the security community identified at the Astana Summit and be one of the building blocks in the framework of the "Helsinki + 40" process.

We would like to emphasise therefore the importance of strengthening and modernising the commitments in the field of conventional arms control and CSBMs, as well as their implementation. These instruments should be brought into conformity with the current military and security conditions. We consider abiding principles and commitments on arms control and CSBMs regimes, as set out in Astana, Vilnius and other relevant OSCE documents, to be not just valid basis for OSCE work but also in need of further progression.

Finding a solution in order to overcome the impasse on conventional arms control remains important for European security. A modern, functional conventional arms control regime that provides verifiable transparency of armed forces would bolster

the security and stability of the whole OSCE area. The EU and its Member States support discussions on conventional arms control aimed at opening the way for committed and result-oriented negotiations.

The Member States of the EU have also repeatedly expressed full support for the Open Skies Treaty, as one of the pillars of the arms control regime. We wish to see the speedy resolution of the impasse in the Open Skies Consultative Commission. We reiterate our support for the pending application of Cyprus to accede to the Treaty.

The EU and its Member States view the Vienna Document (VD) as one of the main components of the OSCE politico-military dimension. In this context, we would like to reiterate our readiness to pursue both a pragmatic and forward looking approach in the process of substantial modernisation of the Vienna Document on CSBMs with the aim of ensuring its continued relevance, and increasing military stability, transparency and predictability for all participating States. The fulfilment of existing politico-military commitments, and openness to their further modernisation, should not be hampered by, but go hand in hand with any major transformation of armed forces. We should do this in a cost effective manner with full regard to resource restraints and with the further aim of improving our overall level of implementation.

It will be important to give careful consideration to all VD+ proposals tabled so far, as well as others yet to be presented. Lowering thresholds for notification should be part of a first substantive adaptation, as previously underlined by the Member States of the EU. This VD+ proposal is fully supported and cosponsored not only by all EU Member States but also by 18 other OSCE participating States. Lowering the thresholds for notification of certain military activities would be a decisive step forward in modernising the VD and therefore its timely adoption is important.

Beside the Vienna Document, the EU and its Member States would like to pay tribute to the impressive set of CSBMs built up and developed by the Forum for Security Co-operation in areas such as Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) and Stockpiles of Conventional Ammunitions, the OSCE Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security, as well as the Forum's support to the

implementation of UNSCR 1540 and UNSCR 1325. All these norms, political commitments, guidelines and best practices, complemented by OSCE's concrete project work on the ground, also contribute to the goal of a security community based on confidence and transparency.

In particular, the OSCE has been at the forefront of regional cooperation in the field of SALW and arms transfers, such as the adoption of the 1993 Principles Governing Conventional Arms Transfers. The recently adopted Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), when effectively and widely implemented, will contribute towards more responsible and more transparent international arms transfers, including in the OSCE region. It is now crucial to gather the maximum number of signatures and ratifications so that the Treaty can quickly enter into force. Therefore, OSCE participating States are encouraged to sign and ratify the ATT at the earliest possible stage. The EU intends to play an active role in promoting the effective implementation of the Treaty.

The Acceding Country CROATIA*, the Candidate Countries the former Yugoslav Republic of MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO*, ICELAND+ and SERBIA*, the Countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates ALBANIA and BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA, and the EFTA country LIECHTENSTEIN, member of the European Economic Area, as well as the Republic of MOLDOVA, and ANDORRA, align themselves with this statement.

* Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.

+ Iceland continues to be a member of the EFTA and of the European Economic Area.