



EUROPEAN UNION

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EU Statement on the Security Issues in the Baltic Sea Region

The European Union and its Member States warmly welcome Mr. Ole Kverno, Dean of the Royal Danish Defence College, and Mrs. Małgorzata Kosiura-Kazmierska, Deputy Director of the Security Policy Department from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Poland, to the Forum for Security Co-operation, and thank them for their interesting presentations.

We commend the Polish FSC Chairmanship for putting the topic on the FSC agenda. We appreciate the opportunity to receive first-hand information on the security situation in the Baltic Sea region including threat perception from the perspective of two countries of the region. In the current security environment, we deem such a discussion as timely and topical.

Recent incidents in the Baltic Sea region with Russian military aircraft raise serious concerns, as was expressed in this Forum last week by some delegations. The number of such incidents is unfortunately on the rise. Such incidents give rise to tension and could result in an accident.

These incidents are yet another reminder of the need to intensify our discussion on modernizing and updating the provisions of the Vienna Document related to Chapter III. We therefore reiterate our call on all OSCE participating States, in particular Russia, to engage constructively in a genuine dialogue on the update and modernisation of the OSCE politico-military toolbox, in particular the Vienna Document 2011. We believe that a substantial outcome of such an endeavour would be beneficial for all of us, as more military transparency can contribute to more security in Europe. We recall in this context the proposals made by several participating States on Chapter III of the Vienna Document on Risk Reduction. The joint proposal of eight participating States led by Poland on Strengthening Co-

operation as Regards Hazardous Incidents of a Military Nature (para.17 of the Vienna Document) should be mentioned in this regard.

Mr. Chairman, today's discussion reminds us also of the multifaceted security challenges we face in the OSCE area. In recent years, our security environment has changed dramatically, notably with Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea and its destabilising actions in eastern Ukraine.

Key challenges to peace and stability continue to underscore the need also for the EU to adapt and increase its capacities as a security provider, with a strong focus on the close relationship between external and internal security. Many of the current security challenges originate from instability in the EU's immediate neighbourhood and changing forms of threats. In this context the European Council of June 2015 and the Foreign Affairs and Defence Council of the European Union of May 2015 committed to mobilise all EU instruments to counter hybrid threats and foster resilience of the EU and its Member States as well as partners. The Council of the EU welcomed the Joint Framework with concrete actionable proposals adopted by the European Commission and the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy on 6 April 2016. The suggested actions build on existing strategies and sectoral policies that contribute to achieving greater security, including the upcoming European Union Global Strategy for foreign and security policy.

Mr. Chairman, the EU welcomes all efforts to strengthen regional cooperation, such as in the framework of the Council of the Baltic Sea States and the Northern Dimension. We specifically recall the discussion we had during the Norwegian FSC Chairmanship on the Nordic Defence Cooperation. In this context, the speakers noted the increased significance of the Baltic Sea Region to European security and touched i.a. upon cooperation with the Baltic States to this end. We would like to use the opportunity and ask the distinguished speakers how they see the perspectives for a deeper security and defence cooperation in the Baltic Sea region.

Finally, we thank once again the speakers as well as the FSC Chairmanship for providing us with the opportunity to exchange views on this interesting topic.

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 NORWAY, members of the European Economic Area, as well as UKRAINE and GEORGIA align themselves with this statement.

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