



## EUROPEAN UNION

### OSCE Forum for Security Co-operation Nr 819 Vienna, 11 May 2016

#### **EU Statement on the Politico-Military Aspects of the activities of the OSCE Office in Tajikistan and security situation in the region**

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The European Union and its Member States warmly welcome Ambassador Mueller to the FSC today, and thank him for sharing his insightful views on security in Central Asia, not least given his extensive experience in the region. We also welcome his presentation of what the Office in Tajikistan is doing in the politico-military dimension in response.

The EU agrees that the security situation in the region is becoming less predictable. We believe, however, that it is important not to exaggerate external threats at the expense of internal challenges and their root causes, which we consider constitute significant threats to stability and security in Central Asia. We therefore highly value the Office's work on strengthening political dialogue between government and civil society, as well as promoting a human-rights compliant approach to countering terrorism.

We agree that there have been unsettling developments in northern Afghanistan over the past few months as militants have increased their presence and we therefore encourage the OSCE to continue its capacity-building activities with Afghan and Central Asian border management authorities. In this regard, we particularly value the work of the Office in Tajikistan and the Border Management Staff College (BMSC) in Dushanbe and for example the Patrol Programming and Leadership project between Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Afghanistan in Dushanbe which aim to encourage cooperation and collaboration between the region's border officials. We take this opportunity to repeat our call for the BMSC to be funded from the Unified Budget. We also take this opportunity to recall the extensive continuing support that the EU and MS are providing to the Afghan Government to further develop their capacity to counter the terrorist threat.

We note that the CSTO is developing its activities in Central Asia and we wonder if Ambassador Mueller could give his assessment of the situation? Likewise, we would appreciate his assessment of the cooperation between the OSCE and the EU's BOMNAF (Border Assistance Mission, Northern Afghanistan)?

We remain concerned about violent incidents around the border enclaves in the Ferghana Valley but welcome the efforts taken by the Tajik and Kyrgyz Governments to address these in a responsible manner, and the efforts made by the OSCE to facilitate cross-border confidence measures and encourage further long-term work on border delineation. We are particularly worried about the fractured relationship between Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

We applaud the patient and committed work of your Office over many years to help address the danger posed by landmines in Tajikistan so that the country is now close to being declared mine-free. This area of pol-mil activity provides a text-book example of effective cooperation between the various international organisations involved in de-mining, as well as of regional cooperation and capacity-building as Tajik officials are now able to offer their expertise and cooperate with Afghan and other regional counterparts. We particularly value the OSCE's role in facilitating and encouraging regional cooperation. Building trust and transparency between officials from neighbouring countries on specific security issues contributes in a practical and local way to the OSCE's overall ambition of building confidence between participating States.

In a similar vein, we welcome your efforts to support the Government of Tajikistan in drawing up a National Action Plan on implementation of UNSCR 1540, and continuing work on supporting implementation of the plan. Such activities offer concrete examples of how the OSCE can assist participating States implement international commitments in a practical way. We urge the Tajik Government to maintain and develop the momentum which the Office in Tajikistan has helped create, as well as participate fully in the FSC and Vienna Document context.

In conclusion, we would like to thank Ambassador Mueller for the years he has devoted to fostering regional cooperation and assisting various Central Asian states develop their capacity and implement their OSCE and other international

commitments in the field of hard security. We trust the OSCE's work in this field will continue to be a key factor in maintaining security in Central Asia.

The Candidate Countries the FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA\*, MONTENEGRO\*, SERBIA\* 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 ANDORRA align themselves with this statement.

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