



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Special Permanent Council Nr 1008 Vienna, 15 July 2014

EU Statement in Response to First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia, Ivica Dačić

The European Union warmly welcomes First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia, Ivica Dačić, to the Permanent Council. We thank him for presenting the priorities of the incoming Serbian Chairmanship.

Mr Minister, much has happened since your predecessor, Ivan Mrkić, addressed the Permanent Council last year in July with his Swiss colleague to jointly outline the vision of your two consecutive chairmanships. Russia's violation of Ukraine's territorial integrity and sovereignty, including the illegal annexation of Crimea and Sevastopol which we strongly condemn and will not recognise and its destabilising actions in eastern Ukraine mean that we are facing the most serious crisis in Europe in many years. The crisis in and around Ukraine affects not only Ukraine, but also has profound implications for all OSCE participating States and the European security order. What is at stake are the established fundamental principles and commitments that have provided a solid cornerstone for security and stability in our area in the last almost 40 years. We welcome your commitment to maintain a strong focus on the crisis in and around Ukraine and trust that you will do your utmost to uphold and defend these established fundamental principles and commitments during your Chairmanship.

We believe the joint work plan of the Swiss and Serbian Chairmanships – with its firm commitment to the OSCE's concept of comprehensive security and respect for OSCE norms, principles, and commitments – remains a valuable source of guidance in this regard. At the same time, the crisis in and around Ukraine and its impact on the OSCE requires us to direct our energy towards responding to this crisis and its wider implications for this Organisation.

Concerning the joint work plan itself, we are pleased that it corresponds to a number of the EU's priorities, including:

- promoting the comprehensive concept of security, the OSCE acquis, and the full implementation of OSCE commitments, especially, the principles and objectives enshrined in the Helsinki Final Act;
- strengthening the OSCE's effectiveness across the conflict cycle, achieving tangible progress in the resolution of the protracted conflicts in Georgia, the Republic of Moldova, and of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, and preventing new conflicts;
- enhancing the OSCE's politico-military commitments through their full implementation and working towards revitalising, updating, and modernising the Conventional Arms Control and Confidence and Security Building regimes in Europe;
- further strengthening of the OSCE's concrete work on fighting transnational threats, in particular implementation of the agreed first set of CBMs for cyberspace, development of a second set of CBMs, implementation of the agreed TNT decisions of 2012, as well as the 2005 Borders concept;
- further strengthening the OSCE's work on good governance as well as relevant confidence building measures in the economic and environmental sphere including, through cooperation on sustainable water management;
- full implementation of all commitments within the human dimension, in particular as regards fundamental freedoms such as freedom of expression, assembly and association, freedom of religion and belief, freedom of the media both online and offline, including the issue of safety of journalists. The prevention of torture, abolition of the death penalty, fight against all forms of discrimination (including LGBTI), and protection of human rights defenders are also important areas;
- strengthening OSCE engagement with civil society, including youth;
- promoting gender equality, women's political and economic empowerment, and elimination of gender-based violence and sexual violence in conflict across the OSCE area;
- Continuing engagement and good EU-OSCE cooperation in the area of Western Balkans;

- enhanced cooperation with Central Asia in all dimensions, including in the context of the drawdown from Afghanistan this year;
- working closely with the Mediterranean and Asian Partners for Cooperation, including Afghanistan, with a view to addressing contemporary security challenges including illegal migration and human trafficking.

We welcome the commitment to reappoint the special representatives on the Western Balkans and the South Caucasus and for the Transnistrian Settlement Process. We fully support efforts to strengthen regional cooperation and reconciliation. As stated in December's General Affairs Council Conclusions, we will continue to monitor closely Serbia's continued engagement towards visible and sustainable progress in the normalisation of relations with Kosovo¹.

Mr Minister, your Chairmanship will see the 40th anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act. The Helsinki+40 process was launched as an effort to advance work towards the Astana vision of a security community. Russia's actions in and around Ukraine have severely undermined this vision. Rebuilding trust by regaining respect for the original principles of the Helsinki Final Act of 1975 now seems to be the most crucial task at hand. At the same time, we believe that the Helsinki+40 process remains an opportunity to address ongoing challenges and to find common ground on the way forward. We therefore welcome your commitment to continue the process.

We share your view that there can be no lasting security and stability without respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. We remain deeply concerned by the worrying trend of these principles and commitments being increasingly challenged in parts of the OSCE space. In that regard, we agree that the autonomous institutions play an indispensable role in assisting participating States to implement their commitments and that they must be adequately resourced. We look forward to working closely with the incoming Serbian Chairmanship in ensuring that the institutions can continue to carry out their vital mandates. We also attach

¹ This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSC 1244 and the

ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence.

great importance to the work of OSCE field operations and are concerned by the current tendency towards downgrading field operations.

Mr Minister, the Republic of Serbia and the European Union enjoy an intensive relationship, particularly in light of Serbia's path towards EU membership. We look forward to continuing our cooperation next year also as your country takes on the OSCE Chairmanship. We are confident that your Chairmanship will further enhance our relations and that Serbia will look to promote and defend the principles and commitments of this organisation.

The Candidate Countries the FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO*, ICELAND+ and ALBANIA*, and the EFTA country LIECHTENSTEIN, member of the European Economic Area, as well as UKRAINE, the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA 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.

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