



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Forum for Security Co-operation No 800 Vienna, 21 October 2015

EU Statement on Nordic Defence Cooperation

The European Union and its Member States warmly welcome Mr. Svein Ejfjstad, Policy Director from the Norwegian Ministry of Defence and Mr. Johan Lagerlöf, Deputy Director General from the Swedish Ministry of Defence to the FSC and thank them for their presentations on the Nordic Defence Cooperation (NORDEFECO). We are also grateful for sharing your views on the current security situation in Europe and the importance of Confidence and Security Building Measures and transparency. We appreciate the opportunity to listen to lessons learnt from a regional military cooperation as well as to discuss challenges we are facing in implementing CSBMs and transparency instruments in the OSCE area and in efforts towards their strengthening.

We would like to reiterate our readiness to pursue a pragmatic and forward looking approach in the process of modernisation of the Vienna Document on CSBMs with the aim to ensure increased military stability, transparency and predictability for all participating States, to prevent conflicts and to restore confidence lost during the ongoing crisis in and around Ukraine. This crisis has above all showed the dangerous consequences that follow when international law and OSCE's fundamental principles are violated. Reconsolidating European security requires restored respect and renewed adherence to international law and established principles of the OSCE. The instruments for conventional arms control and CSBMs, if applied and fully implemented in good faith, in letter and spirit, by all participating States could have been more efficient and useful as instruments for early warning and conflict prevention. Implementing, updating and modernising them is therefore essential. We look forward to negotiations on updating and modernizing the Vienna Document on CSBMs in 2016, including a comprehensive review of the Vienna Document Plus proposals.

We welcome the good example of regional military cooperation of NORDEFECO, which is based upon common objectives and culture of Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden, as well as its geographic proximity. We appreciate the comprehensive cooperation on a political and military level with a broad thematic agenda as capabilities, human resources and education, training and exercises, armaments and operations. We recall the

relevance of optionality and flexible participation in taking part at projects of military cooperation.

We acknowledge the functional and operational synergies developing from cooperation in the field of joint exercise, tactical air transport, education and training, and interoperability in crisis management operations. In view of budgetary restrictions, NORDEFECO represents an important model for smart defence, enhancing cost-effective solutions and procurements while maintaining operational capabilities.

These efforts are complementing international and regional partnerships, such as NATO and the European Union. In the EU we follow a similar approach to increased defence cooperation. The Code of Conduct on pooling and sharing proposed by EDA and adopted in November 2012 by the Council of the European Union comprises a series of actions to support cooperative efforts of EU Member States to develop defence capabilities. The progress achieved by the Code of Conduct on Pooling & Sharing was welcomed by the European Council in December 2013.

The enhanced Nordic military cooperation can be seen also in the wider EU context by providing the Nordic contribution to the EU operation in Chad or through the decision to contribute a Nordic Battle Group. The third Nordic EU Battle Group began its six-month period as the EU's rapid reaction force on standby in January this year, also with participation of all three Baltic countries which further strengthens the military cooperation in the Nordic-Baltic region.

Finally, we would like to ask the distinguished speakers to elaborate to what extent the Nordic model of military and defence cooperation can serve as inspiration for other groups of countries to copy.

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*, ICELAND+ and ALBANIA*, the Country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and Potential Candidate BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA, as well as UKRAINE, the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA 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.

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