



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Annual Security Review Conference Vienna, 23 – 25 June 2015

European Union Opening Statement

The EU and its Member States thank the Serbian Chairmanship and the OSCE Secretariat for organising this year's Annual Security Review Conference. Last year, we gathered against the backdrop of Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea and Sevastopol, which we continue to strongly condemn and will not recognise. This year, we will also discuss the consequences of Russia's ongoing destabilisation of parts of eastern Ukraine. We remain faced with the most serious security crisis in Europe in decades.

The origins of the crisis are clear. Developments in and around Ukraine have above all demonstrated the dangerous consequences that follow when the fundamental principles of the OSCE are violated. This includes the basic principles of the Helsinki Final Act such as sovereign equality and a State's right to define and conduct as it wishes its relations with other States, the non-use or threat of force, and the inviolability of frontiers and territorial integrity. It also includes the recognition of the inherent right of each and every participating State to be free to choose or change its security arrangements – a right we reaffirmed in the Astana Commemorative Declaration just five years ago. The future of Ukraine is for the Ukrainian people to decide.

The solution to the crisis in European security follows naturally from its origins. Restored respect and adherence to the established principles of the OSCE are key to overcoming the crisis. Acts that contravene these principles must be reversed. Reconsolidating European security cannot be separated from concrete actions in relation to the crisis in and around Ukraine. The Minsk agreements must be fully implemented. We recall that there is a clear link between the duration of the EU's restrictive measures against the Russian Federation and the complete implementation of the Minsk agreements. For this reason, EU Member States at the

Foreign Affairs Council yesterday approved a full roll-over of the restrictive measures until 31 January 2016. Any solution must be based on full respect for the sovereignty, territorial integrity, unity and independence of Ukraine. As part of its support for the implementation of the Minsk agreements, the European Union has stepped up its support for the work of SMM. This will bring the total amount of European Commission support to the SMM to EUR 25 million.

Against the backdrop of the crisis in European security there is an urgent need to further strengthen the OSCE's ability to respond to crises based on the comprehensive concept of security and better use of all the OSCE's capacities and mechanisms. We need to strengthen the OSCE's effectiveness across the conflict cycle and to achieve tangible progress in resolution of the protracted conflicts in Georgia and the Republic of Moldova, and of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. The crisis also demonstrates the clear need to implement fully and in good faith the politico-military commitments that OSCE participating States have made in Astana and Vilnius as well as revitalise, update and modernise the Conventional Arms Control and Confidence and Security Building regimes in Europe, including the 2011 Vienna Document. Transnational threats remain key challenges for all of us. The OSCE's concrete work on combating these threats should be strengthened, in particular full implementation of the agreed initial set of CBMs for cyber-space, development of a second set of CBMs, and implementation of the agreed 2012 TNT decisions, last year's Basel declarations on counter-terrorism, as well as of the 2005 Borders Concept. Recent and ongoing developments also show that the security of the OSCE area is inextricably linked to that of adjacent areas. We therefore reiterate our strong commitment to the OSCE partners for cooperation.

Mr Chairman, the European Union is in the process of an ongoing strategic reflection, led by the High Representative and aimed at developing a broad European external strategy to respond to changes to the global environment. The European Union's comprehensive range of instruments, including CSDP missions, for example the EUAM in Ukraine and EUMM in Georgia, contribute to our shared objectives of conflict resolution, peace, and stability on our continent.

Mr Chairman, two weeks from now we will mark the 40th anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act. This anniversary should remind us of the need to restore the respect for the fundamental principles of the OSCE which is key to European security.

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, and the EFTA country NORWAY, member 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.

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