



## EUROPEAN UNION

### OSCE Annual Security Review Conference, Vienna, 24-26 June 2014

#### EU Opening Statement

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Mr. Chairperson-in-Office, Mr. Ministers,

Ambassadors, Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the EU and its Member States let me start by thanking the Swiss Chairmanship and the OSCE Secretariat for their hard work over an extended period to organise this year's event. At last year's ASRC, we gathered under the theme 'Towards Helsinki+40, finding common responses to security threats and challenges'. A year later, with the crisis in Ukraine still unfolding, that now seems very distant. The security situation within the OSCE area has drastically deteriorated since we last assembled in this forum. Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea and Sevastopol which we strongly condemn and will not recognise, and Russia's destabilising actions in Eastern Ukraine have seriously undermined European security. As a result, we are facing the most serious crisis in Europe in many years.

The crisis in Ukraine affects not only Ukraine, but also has profound implications for all OSCE participating States. What is at stake are the established fundamental principles that have provided a solid cornerstone for our area in the last almost 40 years. This is the larger issue that we need to address even as we seek to stabilise the current situation in Ukraine and secure its democratic future. Without full respect for these principles the security of all actors is likely to decrease. If international principles are not respected in the context of the situation in Ukraine, one must also ask how they will be respected in other situations.

It takes years to build trust. Unfortunately, it is too easy to destroy it. Over the past nearly 40 years, the CSCE and OSCE have contributed to overcoming

divisions and building trust in a peaceful Europe. The Helsinki+40 process was designed to build on past achievements and advance work towards the Astana vision of a security community, a vision that has at its core the full implementation of commitments in all three dimensions and where the use, or threat of use, of force is unthinkable. Russia's violations of the fundamental principles and commitments now seem to have taken us back to a point where rebuilding trust and regaining respect for the original principles of the Helsinki Final Act of 1975 are the most crucial tasks at hand. The EU believes that the two tasks cannot be separated. Respect for international law and fundamental OSCE principles and commitments is a basic precondition for the rebuilding of trust and no precedent can be based on their violation. The Helsinki+40 process remains an opportunity to address these ongoing challenges and to find common ground on the way forward.

At the same time, events in Ukraine have highlighted the value of the OSCE. The efforts of the Swiss Chairmanship, including on the highest diplomatic level, the deployment of the SMM, the use of politico-military mechanisms, and the engagement of the autonomous institutions demonstrate the high degree of impartiality, flexibility, and professionalism that characterises the OSCE. The PC and FSC remain important fora for permanent dialogue. The OSCE comprehensive concept of security has yet again shown its relevance. But the past few months also make abundantly clear that the OSCE can only deliver if there is sufficient political will on all sides to fully use its tools and structures.

We cannot talk about OSCE's efforts in Ukraine without expressing our deep concern about the abduction of SMM observers. This is completely unacceptable and we call for their immediate and unconditional release.

The crisis in Ukraine has not made the other thematic sessions on the ASRC agenda less pertinent. On the contrary, it has highlighted the need to strengthen the OSCE's effectiveness across the conflict cycle and the need 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 has also shown the clear need to implement fully and in good faith as well as to update

and modernise the Conventional Arms Control and Confidence and Security Building regime in Europe, including the Vienna Document 2011. Transnational threats remain key challenges and we advocate further strengthening of the OSCE's concrete work on combatting TNTs, in particular 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 as well as of the 2005 Borders Concept. We look forward to discussing Afghanistan's long-term security and stability against the backdrop of the ongoing transitions in the country, important not only for the country itself but also its impact on the region as a whole.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The European Union will continue to work with all its partners towards achieving a political solution to the crisis in Ukraine, while striving to restore respect for the fundamental principles that underpin European security and stability. The EU continues to strongly support OSCE efforts to help bring peace and stability to all parts of Ukraine, including Crimea and Sevastopol. We believe the OSCE is an important part of the solution and we will continue to provide both political and material support to help it realise its full potential in supporting security in the whole OSCE area.

The Candidate Countries the FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA\*, MONTENEGRO\* and ICELAND+, the Country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and Potential Candidate ALBANIA, and the EFTA countries LIECHTENSTEIN and NORWAY, members of the European Economic Area, as well as UKRAINE, the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA, GEORGIA and SAN MARINO align themselves with this statement.

\* The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Montenegro 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.