



EUROPEAN UNION

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EU Statement on SALW projects: case of Republic of Moldova

The European Union and its Member States warmly welcome the speakers to the Forum for Security Co-operation, and thank them for their interesting presentations. We commend the Romanian FSC Chair for convening a meeting on SALW projects with a special focus on the Republic of Moldova. We see this meeting as an important follow-up to the 2016 MC declaration on SALW and SCA assistance projects, an important area of OSCE's contribution to the stability and security in the OSCE region.

The EU is fully committed to the implementation of the OSCE Plan of Action and the UN Programme of Action on SALW on a national, regional and Global basis. Such an approach is fully in line with the 2005 EU Strategy to combat illicit accumulation and trafficking of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) and is demonstrated by ongoing donations by the EU and its Member States to the SALW/SCA projects implemented by the OSCE. The main aim of the EU policy is to prevent the accumulation and trafficking of small arms, light weapons and ammunition. In the same vein, illicit arms trafficking by sea is a matter of utmost importance within the EU, as it is shown by the intention of several EU Member States to table in the FSC a Draft Decision on the "Prevention of illicit trafficking of SALW and/or ammunitions by sea.

We welcome the OSCE's prominent role in providing assistance to participating States with regard to SALW destruction and providing stockpile management and security practices. Such activities contribute to mitigating the risk that SALW get diverted and end up in the wrong hands contributing to crime and terrorism and are thus fully in line with the efforts of the European Union and its Member States.

To this end, the EU and its Member States provide generous support to the various projects in the field of SALW/SCA across the OSCE region, be it bilaterally, or through cooperation with partners, such as the OSCE or SEESAC. Most recently, the EU support for SEESAC activities was extended for the period 2017-2019 by providing additional EUR 6.5 million (Council decision 2016/2356) covering also Republic of Moldova. The overall objective of these activities is increased regional cooperation, improved capacity for PSSM through infrastructure upgrades, surplus reduction and training, enhanced capacity for marking, tracing and record keeping, and reduced illicit possession and misuse of firearms through support for awareness raising and collection campaigns. In this context we would be interested in the speaker's views on how the OSCE cooperates and co-ordinates on politico-military issues with other national and international partners in the Republic of Moldova and how the relationship could be enhanced. We believe at the same time that meetings as this can be conducive in this regard.

Mr. Chairman, the European Union and the Republic of Moldova have a strong relationship, reinforced through our joint Association Agreement. The Agreement has intensified our partnership, increasing our cooperation in some areas and consolidating it in others. The Association Agenda details commitments undertaken by the Moldovan authorities, including progress made. Further work is needed, and on this path Moldova can count on the European Union, on our common work, for the sake of our citizens.

In this context, we once again thank the Chair for providing us with the opportunity to exchange views on this interesting topic.

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 as well as UKRAINE and GEORGIA 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.