



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Special Permanent Council Nr 1033 Vienna, 15 January 2015

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

The European Union warmly welcomes First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia, Ivica Dačić, back to the Permanent Council in his new function as Chairperson-in-Office.

We commend your firm condemnation of the terrorist attacks in Paris. We fully share your view that ‘an attack on free speech is an attack against society as a whole’. Freedom of expression and freedom of the media are fundamental rights and cornerstones of democracy. We will not let these attacks undermine our values. Last week’s barbaric attacks were also attacks against the principle of religious tolerance, as well as acts of hatred and anti-Semitism.

Mr Chairperson-in-Office, the international context in the OSCE area following Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea and actions destabilising the situation in Ukraine has changed since you first began to prepare your Chairmanship. We agree that your main priority this year must be addressing the crisis in and around Ukraine. The wider implications of Russia’s blatant violations of basic OSCE principles represent the most significant challenge we will have to address this year while continuing to respond to developments on the ground. Respect for the fundamental principles must be restored. Any solution must be based on full respect for Ukraine's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognised borders. The Minsk agreements must be fully implemented without further delay. The Trilateral Contact Group must continue to play an essential role in this regard. We urge the Trilateral Contact Group to reconvene as soon as possible, and call on the Russian Federation to engage genuinely and constructively on modalities for implementation of the Minsk

agreements. Building upon the efforts of the Swiss Chairmanship, we look forward to working with the Serbian Chairmanship on a return to respect for the fundamental principles of the OSCE and stand ready to support you.

The OSCE's response to the crisis in and around Ukraine testifies to its significance as a regional security arrangement and a platform for dialogue. The OSCE's engagement on the ground has further demonstrated the important operational capacities of the organisation. We strongly urge you to draw on the full potential of the OSCE and to encourage and support the full and coordinated engagement of all OSCE instruments.

We trust that you will do your utmost to defend the mandates of the autonomous institutions and field operations across the OSCE area during your Chairmanship. We are concerned by the current tendency towards downgrading field presences.

We commend your commitment to place resolution of the protracted conflicts in the Republic of Moldova, Georgia, and of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict high on the agenda this year. The OSCE, with the support of all participating States, must step up its contribution in support of the established conflict resolution processes.

We note that the Western Balkans will be among your priorities. We fully support efforts to strengthen regional cooperation and reconciliation in the region. We look forward to hearing more on how the OSCE and its field operations can facilitate these efforts during your Chairmanship. We appreciate Serbia's continued engagement towards visible and sustainable progress in the normalisation of relations with Kosovo¹.

We look forward to working with you on the implementation of priorities and commitments across the three dimensions. We trust that the Serbian Chairmanship will lead by example.

¹ *This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.*

- a) In the first dimension, full implementation and modernisation of existing commitments in the politico-military field, in particular the Vienna Document, remain an urgent task. We also need to implement recent decisions on Transnational Threats, in particular the two Counter-Terrorism declarations adopted in Basel. At the same time, we should continue to implement the first set of cyber CBMs and work on a second set, which could be adopted during the Serbian Chairmanship.
- b) We remain convinced that the second dimension can and should be better utilised, and should be focused on work which supports conflict prevention and improves security. Good governance, the impact of natural disasters, climate change, energy security and water management remain important areas of work.
- c) In the third dimension, the full implementation of all commitments remains a priority. This should include promoting fundamental freedoms, in particular freedom of speech and freedom of the media, including safety of journalists, as well as continuing the work to combat torture and other cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment or punishment. It is also important that we enhance the involvement of civil society in our work.

Mr Chairperson-in-Office, as you highlighted in the beginning of your speech, this year marks the 40th anniversary of the signing of the Helsinki Final Act. But there will be little cause for celebration this year if the basic principles of the Helsinki Final Act continue to be seriously violated. We remain committed to continue the Helsinki+40 process with the objective of reaffirming our adherence to the concept of comprehensive security by recording practical results reflecting intensified efforts to fully implement OSCE commitments. As you reminded us in Basel, Mr Chairperson-in-Office, 'the period since the Astana Summit showed that solely reconfirming the OSCE principles and commitments is not enough. We need to move from words to actions'. We believe the remainder of the Helsinki+40 process should be pursued in this spirit. We hope that the Panel of Eminent Persons can contribute to re-launching a genuine dialogue.

The Republic of Serbia and the European Union enjoy a close relationship, particularly in light of Serbia's path towards EU membership. We look forward to working with you during your Chairmanship and wish you every success.

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 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.