



EUROPEAN UNION

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

EU Statement on European Security and the role of the OSCE

The European Union and its Member States welcome the opportunity to discuss European security and the role of the OSCE ahead of the informal high-level OSCE meeting in Helsinki in two weeks.

Mr Chairman, as we prepare to mark the 40th anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act, the Astana vision of a security community where there is full implementation of all OSCE commitments and the exclusion of the use, or threat of use, of force seems very distant. Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea and deliberate destabilisation of eastern Ukraine in breach of international law, the UN Charter and founding OSCE principles are blatant violations of the principles, norms, and commitments that lie at the basis of European security. As a result, we now face the most serious crisis in Europe in decades which underlines the key role of the OSCE.

First, the crisis in and around Ukraine has above all showed the dangerous consequences that follow when the fundamental principles of the OSCE are violated. Reconsolidating European security first and foremost requires restored respect and renewed adherence to the established principles of the OSCE. Acts that contravene these principles must be reversed.

Second, the OSCE concept of comprehensive security has proven its enduring relevance. There can be no lasting security and stability without respect for democracy, the rule of law, human rights and fundamental freedoms. This is why we reaffirmed 'categorically and irrevocably' in the Astana Commemorative Declaration that commitments undertaken in the human dimension are matters of direct and legitimate concern to all participating States and do not belong exclusively to the internal affairs of the State concerned. The backsliding in the implementation of

OSCE commitments, particularly in the field of human rights and fundamental freedoms, in some participating States is therefore an immediate security concern for all of us.

Third, the OSCE has shown its importance as an international organisation. The value of the OSCE as an essential platform for dialogue has clearly been reaffirmed. At the same time, the engagement of the OSCE field operations and the autonomous OSCE institutions have demonstrated the indispensable role of these essential OSCE assets. The tendency towards downgrading and unilaterally closing of OSCE field operations in certain participating States is consequently of great concern.

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.

Mr Chairman, the crisis in and around Ukraine has not only showed the strengths of the OSCE. It has also highlighted the limitations of our organisation. Politically, the limits of the OSCE's capacity to act in a situation when one participating State acts in violation of the organisation's fundamental principles have been underlined.

We remain committed to continue the Helsinki+40 process with the common objective of reaffirming our commitment to the concept of comprehensive security by recording practical results reflecting intensified efforts to fully implement OSCE commitments. We will carefully consider the recommendations in the interim report of the Panel of Eminent Persons by mandate of the OSCE Troika. We will also carefully study the panel's final report by the end of the year on the broader questions of security in Europe and in the wider OSCE area. We hope that the recommendations Panel of Eminent Persons can bring a valuable contribution regarding the issues covered by the reports.

We look forward to continuing our discussions at the high-level OSCE meeting in Helsinki next month. We hope that the meeting can contribute to a process of

restoring respect for the fundamental principles of the OSCE. Overcoming the current crisis depends on this.

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, 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.