



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Forum for Security Co-operation N°863 Vienna, 27 September 2017

EU Statement on the Democratic Control of Armed and Security Forces – The role of Parliaments

1. The European Union and its Member States warmly welcome today's speakers, Ms Obradović, the Chairperson of the Defence and Internal Affairs Committee, National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia, and Brigadier General (ret) Vetschera, Adjunct Professor at the University of Vienna, to the Forum for Security Co-operation and thank them for their interesting presentations. We are grateful to the Serbian FSC Chairmanship for putting this important topic on the FSC agenda.
2. We remain strong supporters of the OSCE Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security and attach great importance to the full implementation of its norms and principles, including those related to human rights and fundamental freedoms. The democratic control of armed and security forces, protection of the human rights of armed forces personnel and adhering to the norms of International Humanitarian Law, are all key elements in creating a framework in which armed and security forces operate.
3. The European Union has an extensive policy framework on topics related to today's security dialogue. In 2011 a comprehensive study into 'parliamentary oversight of security and intelligence agencies in the EU' was published. In 2013, assisted by the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces, the European Parliament produced a brochure entitled "Parliamentary Oversight of the Security Sector". Most recently, in the document "Elements for an EU-wide strategic framework to support security sector reform", published jointly by the European Commission and High Representative in July 2016, it is asserted that the security sector must be subject to effective democratic control and oversight. Furthermore it should operate within a clear and unambiguous legal framework approved by the national legislator, including effective civilian control. Its budget should be an integral part of the national budget and be discussed and approved

by the legislature, which must be able to exercise effective oversight. Hence, Madame Chairperson, specific to the context of today's discussion, we believe there is a strong role for Parliaments in the control of armed and security forces, as implied within Sections VII and VIII of the Code of Conduct.

4. We welcome the continuous engagement of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly in supporting and promoting better implementation, awareness-raising, further dissemination and outreach of the Code of Conduct, its norms, principles and its agreed instruments. We recall the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly's 2015 Resolution on the Code of Conduct, recognising the Code as a key normative document for the democratic oversight of armed, security, paramilitary and intelligence forces, as well as the police.
5. We also recall the Structured Dialogue on the 4th and 5th September 2017, namely the session on the Challenges to the Rules-Based European Security Order, and note the overwhelming support of participating States for the principles governing inter-state relations enshrined in the Helsinki Final Act and the Charter of Paris, as reaffirmed within the Code of Conduct. We reiterate the need for all participating States to uphold these vital commitments, in letter and spirit.
6. Madame Chairperson the Code of Conduct was adopted in 1994 and is of an enduring and fundamental character. Nonetheless we remain open to exploring options for its evolution, including the idea to assess the information exchange in qualitative terms, conduct peer reviews of its implementation aimed at increasing transparency between participating States, and reporting of additional information within the annual information exchange on issues related to women, peace and security, as well as on private and military security companies. Additionally we will continue to support the efforts of the FSC Chairmanship, the Secretariat and the FSC Co-ordinator for the Code of Conduct to address deficiencies in implementing and reporting on the Code of Conduct.
7. EU Member States continue to support the execution of FSC Decision 1/08 on the Code of Conduct's Awareness Raising and Outreach Activities. We therefore welcome the ongoing preparation of the Code of Conduct conference in Washington D.C. next month, and look forward to the report on its outcomes.

8. Madame Chairperson the EU is founded on the principles of liberty, democracy, respect for human rights, fundamental freedoms and the rule of law, values that chime precisely with the democratic control of armed and security forces and the OSCE's Code of Conduct. We look forward to hearing the views of other Delegations on the role of Parliaments and hope that today's security dialogue helps reinforce the value and importance of the Code of Conduct in contributing to our mutual, cooperative security. Furthermore we hope that future FSC Chairmanships will follow the lead of the Serbian FSC Delegation and devote attention to different aspects of the Code during their security dialogues in 2018.

The Candidate Countries the FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO* 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, GEORGIA, ANDORRA and SAN MARINO 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.