



## **EUROPEAN UNION**

OSCE Annual Security Review Conference

Vienna, 27 June 2017

Opening session: Strengthening Security Through Dialogue

European Union Opening Statement

The EU and its Member States thank the Austrian Chairmanship and the OSCE Secretariat for organising this year's Annual Security Review Conference (ASRC). Let me warmly welcome UN, NATO and other representatives for their keynote speeches. We value this opportunity to review persistent security challenges in the OSCE region in the spirit of the CiO's leitmotiv of “strengthening security through dialogue”.

Mr. Chairperson, we are collectively confronted with many threats and challenges: attempts to change internationally recognised borders by force, destabilising actions, conflict situations including protracted conflicts, terrorism, organised crime and malicious cyber activity, as well as growing migratory pressures. The OSCE provides a unique and valuable platform, a normative framework and tools to address these threats and challenges together: dialogue is an essential instrument to prevent conflict and strengthen our security.

Yet, we gather here today against the backdrop of a serious security crisis in Europe caused by Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea and Sevastopol, which we will not recognize, and its destabilising actions in parts of eastern Ukraine. The crisis in and around Ukraine poses a challenge to the European Security Order and has demonstrated the dangerous consequences that follow when the fundamental principles of the OSCE are violated.

How can dialogue help us get back on track towards a Europe whole, free and secure? We believe that dialogue - if coupled with corresponding action - forms a necessary part of a process to strengthen security and restore peace. Europe can be

peaceful and secure only if we adhere to our jointly agreed principles and commitments and act accordingly. Acts that contravene OSCE principles must be reversed as part of this process. Reconsolidating European security cannot be separated from concrete actions in relation to the crisis in and around Ukraine. Restoring respect for international law, building resilience and working through an integrative approach to conflict and crisis are among our European priorities. We therefore welcome today's special session with respect to Ukraine and later sessions focusing on conflict resolution and conflict prevention.

This year's launch of the Structured Dialogue is one step in the right direction. Our deliberations thus far have shown that threat perceptions, military doctrines and military force postures are interconnected. We should continue in this endeavour while focusing on risk reduction, and on increasing transparency and predictability. Also here, much will depend on concrete steps and political will. The EU emphasizes the need to work towards creating an environment conducive to reinvigorating Conventional Arms Control and CSBMs and to fully implement the existing commitments in the politico-military area. We remain committed to the substantial update and the modernization of the politico-military instruments in the framework of the OSCE. This notably includes updating and strengthening the Vienna Document. We will discuss this too in the coming days.

Mr. Chairperson - there are areas within the OSCE where recently common ground was found. Ministers reached consensus on preventing and countering the threats of terrorism, violent extremism and radicalisation leading to terrorism and malicious cyber activity. We now focus on implementing our commitments. We should build on this consensus and take a similarly united stance on the protection of human rights and the role of civil society as respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms is a cornerstone of our common security. Likewise, a free, open, peaceful and secure cyberspace will help underpin global security.

The question how to strengthen security is as relevant to the OSCE as a whole, as it is to the European Union and its citizens. This year, the EU celebrated that sixty years ago, recovering from the tragedy of two world wars, we decided to bond together and rebuild our continent. Today, hundreds of millions of people across Europe benefit from living in an enlarged Union that has overcome the old divides.

One year since the launch of the EU Global Strategy, we continue to be committed to strengthening our common security by standing up for a rules-based global order through engagement with the UN, and in cooperation and complementarity with NATO, in full respect of the principles of inclusiveness, reciprocity and the autonomy of the EU's decision-making processes. We remain committed to working with all OSCE partners in order to strengthen our common security.

The EU Global Strategy sets out that European security is best served by the principles of engagement, inclusiveness, responsibility and partnership. These principles are also relevant for our work in the OSCE and for our cooperation with OSCE Partners. We seek to preserve and strengthen OSCE commitments and principles, across the three dimensions on the basis of its comprehensive concept of security. We need to invest in this organisation, to move from a confrontational to a co-operational approach in the crises around us. For that we need not only dialogue and respect for OSCE principles but also mandates, budgets and nominations. Because at the end of the day, nobody wins from a confrontational approach and everybody loses, especially civilians. We have to move forward and continue to stand up for the OSCE and what this organization stands for. Here, let us thank again the outgoing Secretary General, Lamberto Zannier, for ably steering this organisation through such troublesome times.

Let me conclude, Mr Chairman, by underlining that we all have the responsibility to strengthen security through dialogue and couple it with action. The generation before us agreed the Helsinki Final Act and later the Paris Charter. The best way of offering a peaceful future to the next generation, is by promoting our values and by implementing our principles and commitments. The OSCE has the framework and the tools to do so. We should use these and strengthen them. Thank you.

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 ICELAND, member 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, Montenegro and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.