

Spanish Presidency of the European Union

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**OSCE Joint FSC-PC N° 42
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Management in the OSCE area**

The European Union warmly welcomes Ambassador Salber to this Joint FSC – PC Meeting and would like to thank him for his comprehensive presentation on Conflict Prevention and Crisis management in the OSCE area.

We are now well on our way in the Corfu Process. The next major landmark will be the Interim Report due in June. This spring, we have made a step-change, from the brainstorming phase of last autumn, to one where we are working together to fill the process with substance in order to further the ambitious goals that we set for ourselves in Athens.

It has been said many times that our discussions in the framework of the Corfu Process do not take place in a vacuum. Unresolved conflicts pose major threats to the security and stability of the whole OSCE area. It is imperative that we renew our efforts to settle them. Progress on this score would provide a very important impetus to the dialogue on European security. The protracted conflicts are also interlinked with many other threats. For these reasons, in any discussion on the security in and of the OSCE area, issues of conflict prevention, early warning, crisis

management, conflict resolution and post-conflict rehabilitation must figure at the very top of the agenda.

From this perspective, we welcome that the Chairmanship has decided to start this season of Corfu meetings with the conflict cycle. This is one of the EU's key priorities in this process. Today's meeting will be an important contribution in that regard.

The EU believes that our discussions on these issues must take a strategic approach. The overarching goal must be to enable the OSCE to respond swiftly to dangerous situations, before they develop into crises, and to promote sustainable settlements of protracted conflicts.

The conceptual framework for our discussions is and must remain the comprehensive approach to security that has been developed in the OSCE over the decades and that has demonstrated its value and relevance.

Security in the OSCE area can not be guaranteed by narrowing the focus only on so-called hard security – important as it is. For the EU, full implementation of all OSCE commitments and mechanisms, the advancement of democracy and the respect for human rights, fundamental freedoms and the rule of law are all indispensable to prevent conflicts.

Moreover, the role of women as peacebuilders and their vulnerable position as victims of conflict need to be underlined. The empowerment of women is not only important for economic and political development, but also for durable peace, security, conflict

prevention as well as early recovery and reconciliation. The protection of civilians in armed conflict, especially women and children, is a crucial aspect in crisis management.

We must have a vision for the role of the OSCE in this field. In the view of the EU, it should be an effective and pro-active platform for conflict prevention and resolution in the OSCE area. It should be a first responder in crisis situations. Moreover, it should be an initiator of international cooperation in the field of conflict prevention, crisis management and post-conflict rehabilitation. In short, the organization should be a model and a partner for crisis management.

The EU emphasises that minority issues are a root cause of many conflicts. For this reason, we fully support the High Commissioner on National Minorities as a core institution in the field of conflict prevention.

Several member states of the European Union have circulated Food for Thought Papers suggesting ways in which the OSCE's capabilities and capacity to respond in this field could be strengthened. They are national contributions, but they reflect a shared EU perception, and common aims in this process. Likewise, we welcome the fact that other Delegations tabled their own proposals and will carefully study all of them. It is essential that the OSCE can be present on the ground in areas of concern in early warning and crisis situations. We are ready to work with all participating states in order to move towards a substantive contribution to the Interim Report.

Specifically, the EU stands ready to consider reviewing existing OSCE mechanisms and procedures. The objective of such an exercise should be to reconfirm their relevance, update if necessary and explore new ones. Their implementation most certainly requires to be reinvigorated in a way that can make them match the current security challenges in the OSCE area.

Moreover, the EU stresses the need to strengthen the analytical and operational capacity of the executive structures of the OSCE, particularly of the CPC. The Secretary General should be empowered to alert the CiO and the participating States to potential threats that he has identified and to suggest early action steps to be taken.

OSCE debates and in particular PC debates on conflict prevention and resolution issues need to be made more operational. One promising way of doing this could be to base them on specific reports and proposals by the Chairmanship-in-Office, the Secretary-General or the Special and Personal Representatives.

The EU considers that it would be particularly important to empower the Chairmanship in Office to address, promptly and efficiently, emerging crises. It should also be able to support relevant OSCE institutions, including the High Commissioner on National Minorities.

In order to achieve progress we will need to explore workable solutions that combine operational effectiveness with the consensus principle and that will allow the OSCE to react swiftly

and to go from early warning to early action in a timely and effective way.

Formulating and agreeing on ways of strengthening the OSCE's capacity in the field of conflict prevention and resolution is a complex task. It necessitates focused and sustained work. The EU reiterates its support for the work of the Coordinators.

Finally, the EU would like to reconfirm its readiness to work together with the CiO in producing the June Interim Report. It will be a vital landmark in the process, but also a benchmark for measuring the progress we are making. The EU believes that the Interim report needs to reflect the ambitious approach that we have all agreed on in Athens, providing the basis for further decisions on the way forward.

The EU stands ready to continue to play an active and constructive role, in close coordination with the Chairmanship in Office and other Delegations.

Los países candidatos CROACIA* y la ANTIGUA REPÚBLICA YUGOSLAVA DE MACEDONIA*, los países del Proceso de Estabilización y Asociación y los países candidatos potenciales, ALBANIA, BOSNIA Y HERZEGOVINA, MONTENEGRO y SERBIA, los países de la Asociación Europea de Libre Comercio y los miembros del Espacio Económico Europeo, ISLANDIA y LIECHTENSTEIN, al igual que UCRANIA, la REPÚBLICA DE MOLDAVIA y GEORGIA se suman a esta declaración.

*Croacia y la Antigua República Yugoslava de Macedonia siguen perteneciendo al proceso de Estabilización y Asociación.

