



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Forum for Security Co-operation N°966 Regional Security Dialogue on “enhanced Forward Presence” Vienna, 27 January 2021

EU Statement

The European Union and its Member States commend the FSC Chair for putting this important issue on the agenda of today’s meeting. We thank the key-note speakers for their presentations. We believe that today’s discussion will contribute to dispel possible misperceptions and to increase transparency and mutual understanding among participating States, in line with the mandate of our Forum for Security Cooperation.

At the outset, it is important to recall one of the basic OSCE principles that each participating State, bearing in mind the legitimate security concerns of other States, is free to determine its security interests itself on the basis of sovereign equality and has the right freely to choose its own security arrangements, in accordance with international law and with commitments to OSCE principles and objectives. Thirty OSCE participating States have freely chosen to belong to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. Twenty-one of them are EU Member States. Many of them also participate in the enhanced Forward Presence, an initiative of defensive nature.

The European Union and NATO share the same values and face common challenges. Enhanced, mutually-reinforcing and beneficial strategic EU-NATO partnership continues to take place in full respect of and in compliance with the decision-making autonomy and procedures of both organisations, on the basis of the principles of transparency, reciprocity and inclusiveness and without prejudice to the specific character of the security and defence policy of their members.

Threats and challenges in Europe are plentiful. The geopolitical context has become increasingly volatile and unstable. The acts of aggression by the Russian armed forces in eastern Ukraine and Russia's illegal annexation of Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol in 2014 in particular, made us all realise that the fundamental principle of inviolability of international borders is under serious threat on our continent. The EU strongly condemns such acts. EU and NATO have reacted decisively to this blatant violation of international law and responded with appropriate, proportionate measures according to their mandates.

Against this backdrop, we continue to value the efforts aimed at rebuilding mutual trust among participating States. In this respect, this Security Dialogue brings more transparency and a better understanding of the nature of the eFP. We firmly believe that the full implementation and further development of existing commitments in the politico-military dimension, in particular the substantial Vienna Document modernisation, is essential for enhancing military transparency and political stability in the OSCE area. We hope that the discussion today, combined with the Security Dialogue next week, helps to increase confidence among all pS.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

The Candidate Countries REPUBLIC of NORTH MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO* and ALBANIA*, the EFTA countries ICELAND and NORWAY, members of the European Economic Area, as well as UKRAINE, the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA and GEORGIA align themselves with this statement.

* Republic of North Macedonia, Montenegro and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.