



## EUROPEAN UNION

### **Meeting of the OSCE Forum for Security Co-operation N°916 Vienna, 22 May 2019**

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#### **EU Statement on Politico-Military Aspects of Border Security and Management: Challenges and Opportunities of the Regional Approach in Central Asia**

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The European Union and its Member States warmly welcome the speakers to the Forum for Security Co-operation and thank them for their insights.

The EU attaches great importance to Central Asia and the work of the OSCE in the region. The EU is therefore grateful to the Tajik Chairmanship of the FSC for the opportunity to discuss this issue today and for the opportunity to hear from the speakers. It is also a timely debate for the EU, following the Joint Communication last week by the European Commission and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, which sets out a fresh vision for a stronger partnership between the EU and Central Asia.

The EU and Central Asia are longstanding partners in security. Regular meetings of the EU-Central Asia High-level Political and Security Dialogue provide an opportunity for exchanging views on broader security challenges and effective policy responses. Issues that cross borders, such as trafficking in human beings, trafficking in SALW, the trafficking of illicit drugs, terrorism and violent extremism and radicalization that lead to terrorism, among other issues, remain common security challenges for both Central Asia and the EU.

In this context, we would like to stress the importance we attach to enhancing peace and security in the OSCE area by reducing the threat posed by the illicit trafficking and excessive accumulation of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) and conventional ammunition. This is demonstrated inter alia through support and contribution to the OSCE's assistance projects. We therefore appreciate that this important topic is part of our deliberations today and we look forward to the opportunity to discuss SALW/SCA during a dedicated meeting during your tenure.

It is nevertheless important to promote a comprehensive approach to security, including border security and management in line with the OSCE's approach covering all three dimensions. An approach to boost security must therefore go hand in hand with efforts to address the main root causes of insecurity, such as social exclusion and marginalization, lack of respect for human rights, limited political participation, institutional weakness and corruption.

We also support an increased focus on mainstreaming gender as a cross-cutting issue, including in border security. This means increased numbers of female border security officials and screeners, border training reflecting the different roles and needs of women and girls, and increased training to identify victims of trafficking. The OSCE has done valuable work on building capacity for female border security officials and we look forward to seeing that develop further.

The EU and its Member States are grateful for this opportunity to underline the value we attach to the work of the Border Management Staff College (BMSC). It plays a key role in building capacity of the border-related agencies of Tajikistan, neighbouring countries and beyond. We therefore repeat our call for the BMSC to be funded from the Unified Budget, at least partially, to provide much-needed financial stability to enable the college to focus on its educational activities rather than on fundraising.

The EU, as the funder of BOMCA, clearly attaches great importance to its work, as well as to all efforts aiming to improve cross border cooperation, to reduce crime and to improve legal trade, travel and commerce. This is crucial in contributing to mutual trust, regional development, conflict resolution and prevention, and enhanced human security, as well as to indirectly enhance and expand economic development. We thank Ms Goncharova for her presentation and of greatly encourage the strengthening of cooperation between BOMCA and the BMSC.

In conclusion, the EU and its Member States would like to thank the speakers again for their presentations and we look forward to continuing the debate on the important issues raised, including in the OSCE's Security Committee.

The Candidate Countries NORTH MACEDONIA\*, MONTENEGRO\*, SERBIA\* 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 GEORGIA align themselves with this statement.

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