



## EUROPEAN UNION

### **OSCE Forum for Security Co-operation N°944 Vienna, 29 April 2020**

---

#### **EU Statement in response to Mr. Dmytro Kuleba, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ukraine**

---

The European Union and its Member States warmly welcome H.E. Mr. Dmytro Kuleba, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ukraine, to the Forum for Security Co-operation and thank him for outlining the priorities of the Ukrainian FSC Chairmanship, as well as for presenting his views on the current security challenges in the OSCE area.

We would like to use the opportunity to thank the Turkish FSC Chairmanship, Ambassador Soysal and his able team, for the leadership during the last unprecedented trimester. We fully understand the decision to cancel the last three FSC meetings due to the COVID-19 measures. We thank you for the perception paper circulated last week and the interesting ideas for the way ahead. We would also like to warmly welcome Germany as our new FSC Troika member as we bid farewell to the Czech Republic.

Ukraine assumes the FSC Chairmanship at a challenging and critical time. The COVID-19 crisis has reshaped our lives and our working methods, with today's set-up being a clear example of this. You can count, Mr. Chairman, on our full support and understanding for the conduct of the FSC meetings under these specific conditions. On the other hand, we look forward to the times thereafter, hopefully sooner than later, when we could again have physical meetings in Hofburg and to catch up on the traditional Chairmanship hospitality.

While the crisis is on all our minds, none of the other problems that we focused on before the outbreak of the pandemic have gone away. We continue to be confronted with blatant violations of international law and basic OSCE principles. We therefore

call on the participants of this Forum to continue to keep focused on these key challenges and to work together to enhance our security and reduce the risk of conflict in the OSCE region. In this context we welcome your proposal that the first security dialogue next week should focus on the impact of the pandemic on our work.

Our position on Russia's acts of aggression against Ukraine and the illegal annexation of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the City of Sevastopol, which we strongly condemn and do not recognise, is well known. Our support to the sovereignty and the territorial integrity of Ukraine remains unwavering. We will continue to speak up on this serious security issue in the OSCE area. We once again urge all sides to comply with the commitments they have signed up to, as a sustainable political solution to the conflict in eastern Ukraine can only be reached through full implementation of the Minsk agreements. We welcome the continued international diplomatic efforts within the Trilateral Contact Group and the Normandy format. We wish to use this opportunity to commend once again the constructive approach of the Ukrainian leadership to put an end to this conflict and call on Russia to act likewise. At the same time, we remain gravely concerned by continued reports of ceasefire violations, including casualties, and by the restrictions on the SMM's freedom of movement, imposed by the Russia-backed armed formations under the pretext of COVID-19.

We remain committed to the full implementation in letter and spirit of existing commitments in the politico-military dimension, which is essential for enhancing military transparency and political stability in the OSCE area. Towards this end, we continue to support the substantial modernisation of the Vienna Document, as well as the further development of Conventional Arms Control, Confidence and Security Building Measures and other instruments in the politico-military toolbox. The modernisation of our OSCE politico-military toolbox, most notably the Vienna Document, is vital in order to increase military stability, transparency and predictability. We urge all participating States to engage both actively and constructively in these important discussions, taking due account of all VD modernisation proposals on the table, including the joint proposal supported by 34 participating States, and reiterate that this is an open and inclusive process without a predetermined outcome.

At the same time, we want to recall the Ministerial commitment of all participating States in Hamburg 2016 to work towards creating an environment conducive to reinvigorating arms control and Confidence and Security-Building Measures in Europe. We value the Structured Dialogue as a meaningful, transparent, inclusive, state-owned and state-driven process for in-depth exchanges on the current and future challenges and risks to security in the OSCE area and we will continue to actively support it.

Mr. Chairman, we look forward to discussing non-proliferation issues and the implementation of UNSCR 1540. We attach great importance to enhancing peace and security in the OSCE area by reducing the threat posed by the illicit trafficking and excessive accumulation of SALW and conventional ammunition. This is demonstrated inter alia through our support and contribution to the OSCE's assistance projects.

We are pleased that the implementation of UNSCR 1325 on women, peace and security will be discussed during your tenure at the joint FSC-PC meeting in May. We look forward to exchanging views and sharing best practices on how to achieve greater participation of women in the security sector and gender equality in the armed forces. The EU remains determined to continue to be a global leader on these issues, including in the OSCE context, especially in light of the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of UNSCR 1325 later this year.

We welcome continuation of the practice of bringing regional security and defence cooperation issues to the FSC's attention. In this context, we look forward to discussing the Black and Azov Seas security situation which is negatively impacted by the ongoing large-scale militarisation of the Crimean peninsula by Russia.

We also note with interest your intention to devote another joint FSC-PC meeting to the topic of hybrid threats and modern warfare and look forward to exchanging views on this important subject.

Mr. Chairman, we would like to use this opportunity to assure you of our support throughout your FSC Chairmanship. We look forward to working with you and wish you and your team every success.

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

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