



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Forum for Security Co-operation N°873 Vienna, 17 January 2018

EU Statement in response to Mr. Lukáš Parížek, State Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Slovakia

The European Union and its Member States warmly welcome H.E. Mr. Lukáš Parížek, State Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Slovakia, to the Forum for Security Co-operation and thank him for outlining the priorities of the Slovak FSC Chairmanship, as well as for presenting views of his country on the current security challenges in the OSCE area.

We would also like to use the opportunity to once again thank the Serbian FSC Chairmanship for its able leadership during the last trimester of 2017.

Slovakia assumes the FSC Chairmanship at a time when we continue to be confronted with a blatant violation of international law and basic OSCE principles by the Russian Federation following its illegal annexation of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the City of Sevastopol and destabilizing actions in eastern Ukraine. 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 would like to thank you, Mr. State Secretary, for presenting a balanced and comprehensive agenda of the Slovak FSC Chairmanship, which we fully support.

We remain committed to the full implementation of the existing commitments in the politico-military area, including the Vienna Document, the Treaty on Open Skies and the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe. We fully share your assessment, Mr. State Secretary, that our work on the modernisation of the OSCE's politico-military instruments must continue. We therefore highly welcome your intention to facilitate discussions on the state of the Vienna Document and we look forward to this year's AIAM.

We welcome the intention of the Italian OSCE Chairmanship to further develop the Structured Dialogue, building on the valuable work undertaken in 2017. Concerns

remain regarding large-scale and snap military exercises and military deployments in the vicinity of international borders without adequate transparency, as well as hazardous incidents, and a selective approach to the implementation of the OSCE's politico-military commitments. As part of developing the understanding of threat perceptions and security concerns, we support the continuation of the process to map relevant military trends, force postures and exercises.

We will continue to engage in the Structured Dialogue as a means of addressing the current and future challenges and risks in the OSCE area, to foster a greater understanding of these issues that could serve as a common, solid basis for a way forward through an open, transparent, inclusive and honest exchange of views. We look forward to working together with the Italian OSCE Chairmanship as well as the FSC Chairs and the Chair of the Informal Working Group to this end.

Our politico-military commitments provide important means for enhancing military stability, predictability and transparency, thereby reducing threat perceptions and building trust among participating States. We therefore welcome the intention of the Slovak FSC Chairmanship to dedicate one security dialogue to the importance of the reliability of military information and enhancing transparency. We believe that such discussion can further build on the work done in the IWG on the Structured Dialogue as well as during the breakout workshops on CSBMs organized by the 2017 Austrian OSCE Chairmanship.

The EU and its Member States 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 support and contribution to the OSCE's assistance projects. We therefore appreciate the opportunity to discuss SALW/SCA, which is at the same time an excellent follow up to the MC decision 10/2017, as well as to the efforts of the Serbian Chairmanship in the last trimester of 2017. It is at the same time an important endeavour with a view to this year's Third Review Conference on the UN Programme of Action.

We look forward to discussing non-proliferation issues and the implementation of the UNSCR 1540. We also welcome continuation of the practice of bringing regional security and defence cooperation issues to the FSC's attention, this time focusing on

military cooperation of Visegrad group countries. We highly appreciate your intention to devote a joint FSC-PC meeting to the topic of security sector governance and reform. This is an ample opportunity to discuss the comprehensive nature of SSG/R and fully in line with the OSCE comprehensive concept of security.

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 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 countries ICELAND, LIECHTENSTEIN and NORWAY, members of the European Economic Area, as well as UKRAINE, the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA, ANDORRA 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.