



**EUROPEAN UNION**

**OSCE 69th Joint FSC/PC Meeting**

**Vienna, 6 June 2018**

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**EU Statement on the Structured Dialogue**

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The European Union and its Member States would like to thank the Slovenian FSC Chairmanship, as well as the Italian Chairmanship-in-Office, for convening this Joint FSC/PC meeting on the Structured Dialogue and Ambassador Huynen for his very informative presentation. Since the last joint session more important work has been done in the framework of Structured Dialogue, for which we commend the Chairman of the Informal Working Group, Ambassador Huynen and his able team. We appreciate the thorough preparation of the meetings so far, as well as the Chair's perception papers circulated after the 5th IWG and the 2<sup>nd</sup> Expert Level Workshop on Trends in Military Forces and Exercises.

We also appreciate the intense bilateral consultations with all participating States conducted by Ambassador Huynen this year. We fully support your intention to develop further the Structured Dialogue, building on the valuable work undertaken in 2017, as a transparent, inclusive process owned and driven by participating States, and without a predetermined outcome. The 5<sup>th</sup> IWG Structured Dialogue Meeting encouraged an open and meaningful dialogue and allowed for a reflection on how to reduce escalatory risks through practical tools and mechanisms. Furthermore, as part of developing the understanding of threat perceptions and security concerns, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Workshop on Trends in Military Forces and Exercises provided further opportunities for a deeper exchange of views between military experts and we support a continuation of the process to map relevant military trends, force postures and exercises.

Mr. Chairman, the Structured Dialogue takes place in the context of a loss of trust and confidence in the OSCE area following Russia's aggression against Ukraine and its illegal annexation of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol. It is essential to restore full respect for international law and fundamental OSCE principles by all participating States. At the same time, we value this dialogue as a means to address the current and future challenges and risks in the OSCE area, to foster a greater

understanding on these issues that could serve as a common, solid basis for a way forward through an open, transparent and inclusive exchange of views carried out in good faith.

We reiterate our strong commitment to full implementation in letter and spirit of the existing commitments in the politico-military dimension, which is essential for enhancing military transparency and political stability in the OSCE area. We remain strong supporters of Vienna Document modernization. We also emphasise the need to work towards creating an environment conducive to reinvigorating Conventional Arms Control and Confidence and Security Building Measures.

With regard to threat perceptions, as we have emphasised in our previous statements made in the Annual Security Review Conference and joint FSC/PC meetings last year, we continue to favour focusing on cluster one -“Challenges to a rule-based European security order” - and three - “Interstate tension of a politico-military nature” in our further dialogues. In-depth discussions could continue with a focus on risk reduction and de-escalation, which are the main tracks for 2018. We support reflection on best practices on risk reduction measures and on practical tools and mechanisms for incident prevention and management to minimise risks and reduce escalatory potential. These could include measures, such as fact-finding and transparency, better communication channels, including military ones, and enhanced military-to-military contacts, where appropriate. We also look forward to further discussions on threat perceptions, including those resulting from conflicts, given their relevance.

Many participating States have expressed grave concerns 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 our understanding of threat perceptions and security concerns, we value the continuation of the process to examine trends related to military forces, major equipment, expenditure, deployments and exercises. We concur with Ambassador Huynen that a number of elements from the 2nd Workshop on Trends in Military Forces and Exercises deserve our further attention and are ready to continue our dialogue, notably taking into account the elements listed in the perception paper.

Finally, we look forward to continuing our discussions today, and at the Annual Security Review Conference, and assure you, Ambassador Huynen, of our strong support as you work to progress this important task in accordance with the Hamburg Declaration.

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 and LIECHTENSTEIN, members of the European Economic Area, as well as UKRAINE and ANDORRA align themselves with this statement.

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