



## EUROPEAN UNION

### **OSCE Forum for Security Co-operation N°984 Vienna, 8 September 2021**

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#### **EU Statement in response to H.E. Peter Launsky-Tieffenthal, Secretary-General of the Austrian Ministry of Foreign Affairs**

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1. The European Union and its Member States warmly welcome H.E. Mr. Peter Launsky-Tieffenthal to the Forum for Security Co-operation and thank him for outlining the priorities of the Austrian FSC Chair, as well as for presenting views on the current situation in the OSCE area.
2. We would like to use the opportunity to thank Armenia for its FSC Chairmanship during the last uneasy trimester, to bid farewell to the United States who has left the FSC Troika and to welcome Azerbaijan to the Troika.
3. Austria assumes the helm of the FSC at a time of acute challenges in a situation where mutual trust among OSCE pS is deteriorating. Use or the threat of the use of force to change internationally recognised borders and violations of sovereignty and internationally recognised sovereign rights are the most serious issues. We are grateful for the Swedish OSCE Chairpersonship's efforts that allowed us to hold the Annual Security Review Conference last week, thus overcoming in this case a particular "cancel culture", recently à la mode in our Organisation. The Conference was held under the motto "back to basics". For us, it is about the return to the spirit as well as the fundamental principles and commitments of the Helsinki Final Act and Paris Charter. It is not about going back to the times of Cold War and geopolitics defined in the terms of spheres of influence.
4. We agree with you, Excellency, on the urgency to resolve the conflicts in the OSCE area. Conflicts are and should remain the focus for our organisation. We must step up our collective efforts to resolve them, in the interest of the people

in the conflict zones who bear the brunt of the conflicts: in Ukraine, including Crimea, in the Southern Caucasus and Moldova.

5. In this context, let us recall our well-known 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. We remain convinced that a sustainable political solution to this conflict can only be reached through full implementation of the Minsk agreements and we once again urge the sides to comply with the commitments they have signed up to.
6. The situation around the OSCE area is also of high concern. The ongoing developments in Afghanistan will have long-term consequences for the region. The well-being and security of Afghan citizens, political and human rights achievements, in particular those of women and girls, as well as regional and international security, are at stake. The implications and potential security risks, including terrorist threats, should be closely monitored and mitigated.
7. We highly value the work of this Forum and always stand ready for a meaningful, respectful dialogue as well as productive exchanges. We call on all participating States to engage likewise and to avoid a further drifting away from each other.
8. In the next weeks, the focus of our attention will be on arms control. The current OSCE arms control framework remains under a considerable strain. We therefore welcome that you decided to make this topic a priority of your FSC Chairpersonship. While re-engagement in this field would be beneficial for all, it is necessary to underline in this context the importance of the full implementation, in letter and spirit, of all existing commitments in the politico-military dimension, in particular in a situation when military transparency has been in short supply. This 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 update and 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.

9. 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. We look forward to discussing the Structured Dialogue in the joint FSC-PC meeting early November. Later in December we will mark the fifth anniversary of the Hamburg Declaration which includes the commitment of all participating States to work towards creating an environment conducive to reinvigorating arms control and Confidence and Security-Building Measures in Europe.
10. Excellency, we look forward to the discussions in the upcoming months in this Forum. The full, equal and meaningful participation of women in all aspects of our lives goes without saying in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. We will continue to support mainstreaming of gender equality in all three OSCE dimensions. Within the FSC strand of work, we reiterate the need to implement the WPS agenda as outlined in the 2020 Tirana Joint Statement signed by 52 participating States. We hope the other remaining pS will also join us in this endeavour.
11. We value the specific emphasis put on the integration of women in the armed forces which will be addressed in a special event in Stockholm as well as in the security dialogue dedicated to the Code of Conduct. We are convinced that this topic could be brought forward to the upcoming Ministerial Council. While we appreciate the mainstreaming of the implementation of UNSCR 1325 and the Women Peace and Security Agenda in all security dialogues, we would have welcomed an additional session specifically dedicated to the subject.
12. 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 welcome

the planned Security Dialogue on SALW and the Meeting to review the implementation of assistance projects in this area.

13. Excellency, we would like to use this opportunity to assure you of our support in the upcoming trimester on the way to a successful Ministerial Council in December. We agree with you that not the quantity of the so-called “deliverables”, but their quality should be a yardstick by which we measure this success. We look forward to working with Ambassador Raunig, and his team and wish our Austrian colleagues every success.

The Candidate Countries the REPUBLIC of NORTH MACEDONIA\*, MONTENEGRO\*, and ALBANIA\*, and the EFTA country ICELAND, member of the European Economic Area, as well as UKRAINE, 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.