



## EUROPEAN UNION

### OSCE Forum for Security Co-operation Nr 733 Vienna, 6 November 2013

#### **EU Statement on the OSCE Code of Conduct and Human Rights of Armed Forces personnel**

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The Member States of the European Union (EU) would like to thank the Luxembourg Chair of the Forum for Security Cooperation (FSC) for organising this Security Dialogue on the OSCE Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security and Human Rights of Armed Forces personnel: The role of the ombudspersons. We would also like to welcome and thank Ambassador Janez Lenarčič, Director of the ODIHR, for his comprehensive presentation.

We regard the Code of Conduct as a key instrument to consolidate and support democracy, the rule of law, human rights and the principles of international law. We also view it as a tool to preserve peace, prevent conflicts and strengthen international security and co-operation, in accordance with the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter, with the principles of the Helsinki Final Act and with the aims of the Charter of Paris. Therefore, we have been strong supporters of the OSCE Code of Conduct and will continue to promote and enhance the implementation of the Code, including through security dialogues organised in the FSC.

Specifically, the Code of Conduct sets out the principles of democratic control of armed forces, civilian and parliamentary oversight and the rights of armed service personnel, as well as the need to respect international humanitarian law.

Against this background, we support the important work of ODIHR in providing advice and assistance to pS in the strengthening of the implementation of relevant OSCE commitments. We urge pS to take full advantage of ODIHR's expertise.

In this context, we would like to express our support for the series of FSC discussions on relevant human rights issues that the ODIHR has organised this year. This shows the continuous relevance of the OSCE's comprehensive concept of security.

In particular, the conference on the role of ombuds institutions in protecting human rights of armed forces personnel which was organised in Vienna on 14 October 2013. The afore-mentioned events provide a useful contribution to the dialogue in the FSC and we look forward to further discussions of topical issues within the context of the Code of Conduct next year.

To further our understanding of how participating States protect human rights in the armed forces, we call to provide additional information in the annual information exchange with regard to the protection of human rights in armed forces which could relate, if applicable, to ombudspersons and similar institutions.

We also note the Swiss proposal to develop a compilation of practical examples on the democratic control of armed and security forces, which is to include the protection of human rights in the armed forces.

The candidate countries the FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA\*, MONTENEGRO, ICELAND\*\* and SERBIA, the countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate countries ALBANIA and BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA, the European Free Trade Association countries LIECHTENSTEIN and NORWAY, members of the European Economic Area, as well as the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA, ARMENIA, GEORGIA, ANDORRA and SAN MARINO align themselves with this statement.

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

\*\* Iceland continues to be a member of EFTA and the European Economic Area.