



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Forum for Security Co-operation N°831 Vienna, 4 October 2016

EU Statement on "Defence cooperation in the Mediterranean"

The European Union and its Member States warmly welcome Ambassador Ali Mokrani, General Francesco Vestito and Prof. Nuno Severiano Teixeira to the Forum for Security Co-operation and thank them for their interesting presentations. We thank the FSC Chairmanship for continuing the practice of putting regional security issues on the agenda of our meetings.

We have listened with interest to the presentations, which provided us with useful insights on the current security challenges from a Mediterranean perspective as well as models of cooperation to enhance understanding and trust in order to promote security in the Mediterranean region.

Building trust and confidence through cooperation is at the heart of basic OSCE principles and commitments, including in the politico-military sphere. The Vienna Document plays a key role in this regard with its transparency measures aimed at enhancing trust and ensuring predictability and thus avoiding misperception and miscalculation potentially leading to a conflict. It is therefore important that we all assume our responsibility, make use of this year's reissuance of the Vienna Document and review with prudence all VD+ proposals with the aim to substantially modernise the Document in order to bring it in line with the current security needs and military realities.

Today, we were reminded once again that the multifaceted challenges we are all facing cannot be tackled by one country alone and that cooperative approach is needed. The same message was reiterated by our Defence Ministers in Bratislava last week, when they agreed on the need to move forward in strengthening the EU common security and defence policy, by implementing the EU Global Strategy in the field of defence and security. Such approach remains a central tenet of the EU's Foreign and Security Policy and the continued engagement and cooperation with our Mediterranean partners constitutes an important part of it. We share similar security concerns, such as the issue of terrorism, radicalisation but also a refugee crisis and the migratory flows. A peaceful and prosperous Mediterranean is in the EU's interest, and state and societal resilience in southern Mediterranean is one of our strategic priorities. A resilient state is a secure state and security is key for prosperity and democracy.

The turbulent events in the southern Mediterranean countries in the past few years have shown that security issues cannot be isolated from broad developmental and economic issues. Therefore, the EU will pursue tailor-made policies to support inclusive and accountable governance, critical for the fight against terrorism, corruption and organised crime. The EU will also continue maintaining maritime security, saving lives at sea and preventing human tragedies in the Mediterranean. To this end, on 20 June the naval operation EUNAVFOR MED Sophia was extended by one year. This step marks an important contribution of the EU to the fight against smuggling activities, be they related to human or weapons trafficking, and the return to stability in the Central Mediterranean.

In this vein, we would like to reiterate that the EU is committed to pursuing and strengthening cooperation with our Mediterranean Partners, including through the OSCE, wherever the organisation can be of assistance with its comprehensive approach to security in order to better confront current and emerging challenges both regionally and globally.

Finally, we thank once again the distinguished speakers for their excellent presentations and the FSC Chair for providing us with the opportunity to exchange views on this interesting topic.

The Candidate Countries the FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO*, SERBIA* and ALBANIA*, the Country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and Potential Candidate BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA, and the EFTA country ICELAND, member of the European Economic Area, as well as UKRAINE, the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA, GEORGIA and SAN MARINO align themselves with this statement.

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