



EUROPEAN UNION

**OSCE Forum for Security Co-operation N°964
Vienna, 16 December 2020**

EU Statement – Closing session under the German FSC Chair

The European Union and its Member States wish to take this opportunity to thank you, Ambassador Bräutigam, and your able team for the tremendous work done in chairing the FSC in the past trimester, especially under the challenging conditions imposed on all of us by the ongoing pandemic. Although we regret that at the Ministerial Council it was not possible to reach unanimous agreement in the areas of work of the FSC, we commend the German Chair for their untiring engagement and effort in seeking consensus. We hope that all participating States will engage in this Forum's discussions in a positive spirit next year, enabling us to achieve more tangible outcomes.

Madame Chair, we appreciate your choice of topics for our Security Dialogues, which enabled us to deepen our discussion on issues of significant importance to us, such as implementation of UNSCR 1325, Vienna Document modernisation and small arms and light weapons. Equally, we welcomed your initiative to bring to our attention other interesting topics such as modern military technologies. We were pleased not only with the choice of speakers, but also with the gender balance of panels; a good practice that we hope to see continued in the future.

We particularly enjoyed the discussion on SALW assistance projects, where we heard about best practices in implementing the Western Balkans SALW Roadmap from the perspective of donors, local authorities and OSCE structures. Fostering local ownership and close cooperation between all stakeholders is vital in order to increase the effectiveness of these projects on the ground. The EU and its Member

States remain strongly engaged in the fight against illicit trafficking of SALW and SCA and will continue to invest considerable resources in this area of crucial importance to all of us.

We firmly believe that the full implementation of the existing commitments in the politico-military dimension is essential for enhancing military transparency and political stability in the OSCE area. Towards this end, we will also continue to support the substantial modernisation of the Vienna Document and the further development of Conventional Arms Control and CSBMs. We urge all pS to engage in these important discussions at the OSCE in 2021, taking due account of all VD modernisation proposals on the table, including the joint proposal supported by 34 pS, and recall that this is an open and inclusive process without a predetermined outcome.

At the same time, we want to recall the Ministerial commitment of all participating States in Hamburg 2016 to work towards creating an environment conducive to reinvigorating arms control and Confidence and Security-Building Measures in Europe. We value the Structured Dialogue as a meaningful, 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 in 2021. We welcome the fact that you included a joint session of the FSC and the PC on the Structured Dialogue in the agenda.

In concluding, we wish to reiterate that the resolution of the protracted conflicts in the OSCE area remains a top priority for the European Union. Russia's acts of aggression against Ukraine and the illegal annexation of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol pose a major threat to our common security and rules-based international order. We have recalled our position on this on a weekly basis, here in this Forum, and will continue to do so in the future. Our support to the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine within its internationally recognised borders remains unwavering. We welcome the continued international diplomatic efforts within the Normandy Format, where your country is one of the two mediators together with France, as well as within the Trilateral Contact Group and we once again urge all sides to comply with the commitments that they have signed up to.

We look forward to the US taking over the helm of the FSC in January and we would like to use this opportunity to assure our American colleagues of our support in the next trimester.

The Candidate Countries REPUBLIC of NORTH MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO* and ALBANIA*, the EFTA countries ICELAND, LIECHTENSTEIN and NORWAY, members of the European Economic Area, as well as UKRAINE, the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA, GEORGIA, ANDORRA and SAN MARINO align themselves with this statement.

* Republic of North Macedonia, Montenegro and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.