



EUROPEAN UNION

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EU Statement on Arms Control and Confidence- and Security-Building Measures: Challenges and Opportunities

The European Union (EU) and its Member States would like to thank the Swiss and Moldovan Chairmanships, as well as the key-note speakers, for this useful opportunity to assess the Conventional Arms Control and confidence and security -building commitments and activities in the OSCE area especially during a period when trust and confidence in the OSCE area are severely damaged by the illegal annexation of the Ukrainian regions of Crimea and Sevastopol by the Russian Federation, and by the security crisis in and around Ukraine.

The importance of our politico-military toolbox could not be greater in the context of the fast evolving and deeply disturbing crisis, which has been taking place in Ukraine over the past 4 months, since the risk of politico-military miscalculation and further escalation of violence is high.

The existing interlocking and mutually reinforcing web of arms control obligations and commitments have proven to be of importance for all OSCE participating States, so the strategic objective of their revitalisation, updating and modernisation should be maintained and further pursued, as soon as conditions allow.

Finding a solution in order to overcome the impasse on conventional arms control in Europe remains important for the security in the OSCE area as a whole. A modern, functional conventional arms control regime that provides verifiable transparency of armed forces would bolster the security and stability, if respected and fully implemented. The EU and its Member States support discussions on

conventional arms control aimed at opening the way for committed and result-oriented negotiations.

The EU and its Member States have also repeatedly expressed full support for the Open Skies Treaty, as one of the pillars of the Euro-Atlantic arms control regime. With the certification of the Russian observation aircraft equipped with the digital sensor, the Treaty has entered the digital age. We look forward to the constructive and fruitful work which lies ahead of us in the Open Skies Consultative Commission. Furthermore, we reiterate our support for the pending application of Cyprus to accede to the Treaty.

The EU and its Member States view the Vienna Document as one of the main components of the OSCE politico-military dimension. At this occasion, we would like to underline that *the raison d'être* of the Vienna Document is to build regional confidence and security by implementing the commitments all OSCE participating States have made to refrain from the threat or use of force, including in relation to the territorial integrity, independence and sovereignty of States.

We believe that in such circumstances fully respecting, both in letter and in spirit, the existing OSCE commitments in the politico-military area remains a priority task to be pursued. At the same time there is a need to take forward the modernisation of the Vienna Document while taking stock of the experience and lessons learnt during the Ukrainian crisis, in particular regarding the risk reduction mechanism.

The EU and its Member States would also like to stress the importance of the comprehensive set of CSBMs built up and developed by the Forum for Security Co-operation in areas such as Small Arms and Light Weapons and Stockpiles for Conventional Ammunition, the OSCE Code of Conduct, UNSCRs 1540 and 1325, which should be fully implemented and further enhanced, including by its adaptation to recent UN developments.

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

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

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