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Working Session IV:

EU Statement on “Making a difference on the ground: The OSCE’s role in early warning, conflict prevention, crisis management, conflict resolution and post conflict rehabilitation”

The European Union thanks the Albanian Chairmanship for convening this working session. We welcome this opportunity to discuss issues relating to the OSCE’s role in early warning, conflict prevention, crisis management, conflict resolution and post conflict rehabilitation.

Conflict prevention and response to emerging crises lie at the very heart of OSCE activities. Whereas the OSCE plays a central normative role for European security and is the inclusive platform for dialogue and confidence-building, it is important that the organisation also has the ability and tools to prevent and respond to crises and conflicts. We should do all we can to ensure that its conflict prevention and resolution capacities are sufficiently equipped to deal with the challenges we continue to face in the OSCE region.

The European Union has been constantly emphasizing that the full implementation of MC Decision 3/11 on the Elements of the Conflict Cycle is a prerequisite for strengthening the role of the OSCE in early warning, conflict prevention, mediation, crisis management, conflict resolution and post-conflict rehabilitation across the three dimensions. The 10th anniversary of the Decision provides a valuable opportunity to take stock of the work done, assess the way the OSCE addressed all phases of the conflict cycle, identify the remaining obstacles to its full implementation, and discuss and agree on best ways to overcome them. In order to achieve that, sufficient resources must be provided.

We believe that the work undertaken by the Secretariat, the autonomous institutions, field operations and other executive structures to implement MC Decision 3/11 is of utmost

importance. Many key efforts are only possible due to the strong and flexible mandates of the three autonomous institutions and field operations. These need to be preserved, especially during the current challenging circumstances posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. We highly appreciate the role of ODIHR, RFoM and the HCNM for providing early warning and offering assistance related to handling challenges in the human dimension, also arising by the pandemic. Furthermore, the HCNM is and should remain a core conflict prevention actor for the whole OSCE area, providing early warning and seeking early action with regard to tensions involving persons belonging to national minorities.

OSCE field missions play a highly important role in early warning and in addressing conflict situations. Their work with and across host countries and with civil society is of tremendous importance for sustaining peace within the full spectrum of the conflict cycle. The added value of field missions has also been proven during the recent months, when they provided valuable support to host countries in fighting the COVID-19 pandemic. It is worth noting that OSCE executive structures also play a particularly important role providing a safe space for dialogue with civil society.

The EU is engaged in many conflict prevention efforts around the world. It pursues an integrated approach, making use of all available tools and aiming at strengthening long-term resilience. In this respect, the EU has invested significantly in the resilience of its partners in the Western Balkans, Eastern partnership countries, Central Asia and in the MENA region. The EU remains determined to continue to assist the Western Balkans on their path towards lasting political and security consolidation, in particular through their clear European perspective. In this respect we appreciate the valuable work conducted by Ambassador Braathu and the OSCE Mission in Kosovo. In terms of conflict prevention and resolution, the EU-facilitated Dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina remains an essential requirement for both in order to advance on their respective European paths, in line with the European perspective of the region. The appointment of EU Special Representative Lajcak by the Council in support of the High Representative further demonstrates our renewed engagement. The EU also acknowledges the need to address global challenges affecting both the EU and Eastern partners as a whole. Strengthening resilience as an overriding policy framework will be one of the key goals for the Eastern Partnership region during the next years including in the areas of society, security, organised crime and cyber, as outlined in the Council Conclusions on Eastern Partnership policy beyond 2020 adopted on 11 May 2020 and the Joint Communication of 18 March 2020, endorsed by the EaP leaders last week. In Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia and Ukraine the EU also successfully contributes to

support conflict prevention, peacebuilding and rehabilitation, countering disinformation threats, reinforcing cyber security and resilience through the Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace (IcSP). I would also like to mention the cooperation between the EU and OSCE on a project aimed at ensuring the security and safety of Tajikistan's southern border region with Afghanistan, in line with the new EU Strategy for Central Asia. This initiative reflects the attention that the EU pays to strengthening cooperation with the OSCE on common security challenges and addressing drivers of instability.

Women's participation and gender equality in all phases of the conflict cycle is a key priority for the EU. The implementation of 2004 OSCE Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality together with the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 and related resolutions, are as important as ever today. Evidence shows that the full and meaningful participation of women in all aspects of peace and security decision-making and action is crucial to bring about long-lasting and sustainable peace. Across all conflicts, the EU promotes the role of women in decision-making and in peace and security efforts, and has deployed gender advisers to CSDP missions and operations for more than a decade. We commend the Albanian Chairmanship for holding women, peace and security as one of their key priorities and look forward to continuing our cooperation with them on the upcoming 20th anniversary of the Resolution. We would highly appreciate if the panelists could share their views on how the OSCE could best enhance women's participation in the security sector as well as in early warning and conflict resolution more broadly.

Furthermore, the EU grounds all its actions across the conflict cycle in the firm commitment to upholding human rights and supporting democratic values. We also work closely with civil society in all phases of the conflict cycle both in Brussels and on the ground. In this regard, we particularly welcome the presentation by Ms. Annika Söder, President of the European Institute of Peace, which highlighted how her organization has been working with partners, including the EU, in support of sustainable peace.

In conclusion, we would like to thank again the Albanian Chair and the speakers for today's discussions. The European Union reiterates its support for the efforts intended to advance the implementation of MC Decision 3/11 and remains committed to supporting the OSCE's role across the conflict cycle.

Thank you.

The Candidate Countries REPUBLIC of NORTH MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO* and ALBANIA*, the Country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and Potential Candidate BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA, and the EFTA countries ICELAND and LIECHTENSTEIN, members of the European Economic Area, as well as

UKRAINE, the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA, ARMENIA, 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.