



EUROPEAN UNION

57th Joint FSC PC Meeting Vienna, 21 May 2014

EU Statement on "Efforts in the Field of Disarmament"

The European Union welcomes the convening by the Swiss and Moldovan Chairmanships of this Joint FSC PC meeting dedicated to the efforts of the international community in the field of disarmament. We warmly welcome H.E. Angela Kane, the United Nations High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, and express our appreciation for her comprehensive and insightful contribution to this very important topic which is of increased relevance for our region in particular given the situation in and around Ukraine.

The OSCE's will and ability to play a prominent role in support of the global disarmament efforts have been convincingly demonstrated by the adoption on 4 December 2013 in Kyiv of the Decision and the subsequent Ministerial Council Declaration on the update of the OSCE Principles Governing Non-Proliferation. This role also builds upon the contribution of the Republic of Belarus, the Republic of Kazakhstan, and Ukraine to nuclear disarmament and to strengthening international peace and security as non-nuclear-weapon states Parties to the NPT.

In addition, the historical decisions taken by States in the OSCE area on the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones was recently complemented in the margins of the 3rd session of the Preparatory Committee of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty in New York with the signing of the Protocol to the Treaty on a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Central Asia by China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom and the USA. We hope this example from the nuclear field will be followed elsewhere and OSCE participating States will redouble efforts to fully implement and update their commitments in other relevant areas such as the control of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW), conventional weapons and their ammunition.

For its part, the European Union is staunch supporter, both politically and financially, of the international efforts in the field of disarmament where our action is guided by the 2003 EU Strategy against the proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) which puts a strong emphasis on the multilateral nature of the response to the threat posed by the proliferation of WMD and their means of delivery. In this respect, we highly value the UN's, and in particular UNODA's, activities which have been supported through several EU Council Decisions.

Mr. Chairperson, let me further elaborate on a few issues which we find of special relevance to the EU's and OSCE's efforts in the field of disarmament such as the implementation of UNSCR 1540, the combat of the illicit spread and destabilising accumulation of SALW and their ammunition as well as the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT).

As you well know, the European Union has since the beginning committed itself to the robust and effective implementation of UNSCR 1540 and subsequent UNSCRs 1673 and 1810 with the objective of strengthening global efforts to prevent the acquisition and use by terrorists of nuclear, biological, chemical weapons and materials as well as their means of delivery. We are consistent in our support for national and regional efforts towards the implementation of UNSCR 1540, including through enhanced cooperation with the UNSC Committee established pursuant to UNSCR 1540, its group of experts and UNODA.

In this context, we welcome the combined efforts of the EU and the OSCE and believe that the cooperation should be reinforced and focused on developing practical activities. These include, inter alia, provision of assistance to participating States, at their request, for the development of national action plans, facilitating information sharing, promoting best practices and strengthening relevant multilateral information exchange networks related to the implementation of UNSCR 1540. To that end, we look forward to translating the deliberations at the first Meeting of the OSCE Points of Contact on UNSCR 1540, which took place on 10 April 2014 in Vienna, into concrete follow-up steps.

Equally, we remain of the firm opinion that the OSCE's role and capacities devoted to the implementation of UNSCR 1540 and related resolutions in the OSCE area, as well as the provision of practical assistance to participating States, at their request,

need to be further enhanced and put on a sustainable basis by inclusion in the Unified Budget. We welcome the joint efforts of the OSCE and UNODA in this context and would appreciate their further operationalization, including by the involvement of the UNODA Office in Vienna. It is worth mentioning that the last EU Council Decision in support of the implementation of UNSCR 1540, adopted in July 2013, provides for cooperation between its implementing agency UNODA and the OSCE amongst others with a view to ensure effective synergies and avoid duplication.

Mr. Chairperson, the ongoing crisis in and around Ukraine has, unfortunately, brought to the fore the need for disarmament as a key de-escalatory step which features in the 17 April Geneva Joint Statement. On 12 May the EU Council has encouraged Ukraine to immediately develop a national disarmament programme together with OSCE specialists targeting all illegally armed groups throughout the country and to end all illegal occupation of public buildings and squares. We duly took note of the timely implementing measures undertaken by the OSCE Secretariat in this direction, including the project for a Repository Programme Ukraine Disarmament Fund.

The crisis in and around Ukraine has thus emphasised the imperative to strengthen the broad range of OSCE commitments in the field of control of SALW and Stockpiles of Conventional Ammunition (SCA) and conventional weapons. In this respect, we believe that the MC decision 8/13 represents a very good basis for further reducing the risks related to the illicit spread and destabilising accumulation of SALW and SCA. We are therefore ready to make all efforts to put in practice its provisions in order to strengthen norms and activities in this area through improved implementation and increased coherence with the UN framework, including recently adopted documents such as the ATT, UNSCR 2117, which is the first ever adopted by the Security Council on the topic of SALW, as well as UNSCR 2106 and 2122 on women, peace and security.

In this context, we reiterate our steadfast support for both the UN Programme of Action on SALW and the OSCE Document on SALW and remain ready to continue actively upholding them. The European Union is looking forward to a substantive discussion at the upcoming Fifth Biennial Meeting of States of the UN Programme of Action to the preparation of which it has contributed by submitting a working paper.

The European Union has played a leading role in the process of adoption of the landmark ATT by the UN General Assembly. Since then all 28 EU MS have signed the Treaty and on 2 April 2014 17 of them jointly deposited their ratification instruments, thereby significantly contributing to reaching the threshold of 50 ratifications needed for its entry into force. The other EU MS will soon deposit their ratification instruments as their national procedures are well underway. In this context, we encourage all OSCE participating States to sign and ratify the Treaty as soon as possible. We would also like to explore the possible role of the OSCE in promoting the ATT in order to secure its early entry into force and to maximise its effectiveness.

Let me conclude, Mr Chairpersons, by thanking you and Madam Angela Kane for providing us with this excellent opportunity to discuss at today's Joint FSC PC meeting the importance of the global efforts in the field of disarmament.

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 UKRAINE, the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA, GEORGIA and MONACO align themselves with this statement.

* 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.