



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Forum for Security Co-operation N°891 Vienna, 12 September 2018

EU Statement on Regional Cooperation to Increase Transparency and Confidence

The European Union and its Member States warmly welcome the speakers to the Forum for Security Co-operation and thank them for their presentations. We also commend the FSC Chair for including the topic on the agenda.

We have listened with interest to the views of the distinguished speakers on the current security situation in Europe from the Nordic-Baltic perspective and the importance of Confidence and Security Building Measures and transparency. We equally appreciate the opportunity to share lessons learnt from regional military cooperation as well as to discuss challenges we are facing in implementing CSBMs and transparency instruments in the OSCE area and in efforts towards their strengthening. In this context, we reaffirm the importance of the principles enshrined in the Helsinki Final Act concerning the inherent right of sovereign states to choose whether or not they belong to international organisations, bilateral or multilateral treaties, or treaties of alliance.

The presentations have shown that military transparency, adequate information exchange in air and at sea, communication and predictability are important elements of risk reduction leading to military stability. Hazardous and dangerous incidents of a military nature raise serious concerns, give rise to tension and could result in an accident or even escalation. We therefore welcome proposals on various Vienna Document chapters aimed at strengthening the provisions of the Vienna Document adapting it to the current security environment, including Chapter III proposals on 'Risk Reduction'. These are examples of efforts to dispel concerns and thereby strengthen confidence between OSCE participating States. We recall in this context the proposals made by EU Member States on both para 16 and 17 of Chapter III, which a vast majority of participating States argues would reduce risks and tensions, and the French VD+ Proposal, co-sponsored by all EU Member States, on lowering thresholds for prior notification of certain military activities. We remain strong

supporters of full implementation and a substantial modernisation of the Vienna Document and encourage participating States to increase regional transparency and confidence in accordance with Chapter X of the Vienna Document. We also hope that our discussions today can contribute to increasing military transparency and predictability and inform the Structured Dialogue at next week' s combined session of the 6th IWG SD in capitals format/3rd Expert Level Workshop.

We welcome the good example of regional military cooperation of NORDEFECO, which is based upon common objectives, culture and geographic proximity of Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden. We equally appreciate the presentations on regional cooperation in the area of training and education, as well as on cooperation in the area of sea surveillance among navies of SUCBAS countries.

Such efforts are complementing international and regional partnerships, such as with and within the European Union and NATO and they also follow the premise that the best way to face the current challenges to peace and security is through collaboration.

In the EU we follow a similar approach. Over the last two years, important steps in the area of security and defence have been taken, in full complementarity with other partners. The establishment of the European Defense Fund (EDF) and of the Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) including the work on concrete projects, as well as the establishment of the Military Planning and Conduct Capability (MPCC) are some of the most prominent examples to be mentioned in this context.

The security environment in and around Europe has become more complex and threats have multiplied. The EU wants to ensure security for its citizens in an unstable world. Today, guaranteeing our security means dealing with threats that transcend borders. No single country can address them alone, which is why the EU and its Member States will continue to add its value through promoting increased cooperation and coordination in the area of security and defence for the sake of their citizens.

Finally, we thank the FSC Chair for providing us with the opportunity to exchange views on this important 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.