



EUROPEAN UNION
OSCE Forum for Security Co-operation N°904
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EU Statement in response to Mrs. Pascale Baeriswyl, State Secretary, Federal Department of Foreign Affairs of Switzerland

The European Union and its Member States warmly welcome H.E. Mrs. Pascale Baeriswyl, State Secretary, Federal Department of Foreign Affairs of Switzerland, to the Forum for Security Co-operation and thank her for outlining the priorities of the Swiss FSC Chairmanship, as well as for presenting the views of her country on the current security challenges in the OSCE area. We would like to thank you, Mrs. State Secretary, for presenting a balanced and comprehensive agenda for the Swiss FSC Chairmanship, which we fully support.

We would also like to use the opportunity to once again thank the Swedish FSC Chairmanship for its able leadership during the last trimester of 2018 which resulted in the adoption of the MC declaration on OSCE efforts in the field of norms and best practices on SALW and SCA. We also welcome Tajikistan as a new Troika member.

Switzerland assumes the FSC Chairmanship at a time when we continue to be confronted with a blatant violation of international law and basic OSCE principles by the Russian Federation following its illegal annexation of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the City of Sevastopol and destabilizing actions in eastern Ukraine. We once again urge all sides to comply with the commitments they have signed up to, as a sustainable political solution to the conflict in eastern Ukraine can only be reached through full implementation of the Minsk agreements.

We have repeatedly expressed our utmost concern about the dangerous increase of tensions in the Azov Sea and Kerch Strait and Russia's violations of international law. This also has a negative impact on the security situation in the entire Black Sea region. We reiterate our dismay over the unacceptable use of force by Russia on 25 November, which happened against the backdrop of

increasing militarization in the area. We reiterate our strong call on Russia to release the captured vessels, their crew and equipment unconditionally and without delay. This incident is a stark reminder of the fact that when international law is violated tensions and instability are bound to rise, affecting us all.

We reiterate our strong commitment to full implementation in letter and spirit of the existing commitments in the politico-military dimension, which is essential for enhancing military transparency and political stability in the OSCE area. We therefore welcome your intention to devote attention of this Forum to ideas for better implementation and application of the existing tools. At the same time, we remain strong supporters of Vienna Document modernisation and we welcome proposals on various Vienna Document chapters aimed at strengthening its provisions and adapting it to the current security environment. We encourage all pS to re-engage on Vienna Document modernisation in 2019. This year's AIAM provides another opportunity for examining the state of the Vienna Document, and possibly identifying concrete areas where further modernisation is urgently needed. We equally look forward to continuing our discussions on concrete VD+ proposals at the WG A.

We emphasize the need to work towards creating an environment conducive to reinvigorating Conventional Arms Control and CSBMs. 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 actively support it. We regret that it was not possible to reach consensus in Milan on a MC Decision on strengthening military transparency, risk reduction and incident prevention. These remain important issues, progress on which could benefit all participating States and we see merit in discussing them further in a constructive manner. We stand ready to continue our deliberations to this end in the FSC this year, as well as in the IWG Structured Dialogue. We also look forward to the Intersessional OSCE Dialogue on Military Doctrines organised at Austria's initiative during your Chairmanship as another opportunity to discuss new security challenges, threat and risk perceptions and their repercussions for military doctrines.

The EU and its Member States attach great importance to enhancing peace and security in the OSCE area by reducing the threat posed by the illicit trafficking and excessive accumulation of SALW and conventional ammunition. This is

demonstrated inter alia through support and contribution to the OSCE's assistance projects. We therefore appreciate the opportunity to discuss SALW/SCA twice during your tenure. We see these meetings as an excellent opportunity for a follow up to the MC declaration 5/18, to discuss current initiatives in this field, as well as for us to present work done in the EU context, including the new EU SALW Strategy.

We also welcome continuation of the practice of bringing regional security and defence cooperation issues to the FSC's attention, and we highly appreciate your intention to devote a joint FSC-PC meeting to the topic of security sector governance and reform. This is an ample opportunity to discuss the comprehensive nature of SSG/R and is fully in line with the OSCE comprehensive concept of security. As a staunch supporter of the OSCE Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security, we also welcome the fact that this topic features prominently on your agenda, including through specific discussion of Private Military and Security Companies. We are pleased that the implementation of UNSCR 1325 on women, peace and security will be discussed during your tenure and look forward to exchanging views and sharing best practice on how to achieve greater participation of women in the security sector and gender equality in the armed forces.

Mr. Chairman, we would like to use this opportunity to assure you of our support throughout your FSC Chairmanship. We look forward to working with you and wish you and your team every success.

The Candidate Countries the FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO* and ALBANIA*, and 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.

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