



EUROPEAN UNION

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EU Statement on Aspects of Modern Warfare

The EU and its Member States thank the Swiss FSC Chairmanship for drawing the attention of this Forum to the topic of aspects of modern warfare and the distinguished speakers for their insightful presentations.

We welcome today's security dialogue on aspects of modern warfare including hybrid threats. As pointed out in the concept paper, which we also welcome, the topic of modern warfare, including inter alia hybrid threats, modern technologies, military doctrines and involvement of non-state actors was brought to the OSCE agenda in the context of the IWG Structured Dialogue. We see merit in discussions in other OSCE bodies on ideas put forward in the context of the IWG Structured Dialogue.

Modern technologies create new challenges and risks and influence our threat perceptions. There could be merit in further discussions on adapting the existing OSCE CSBM and Conventional Arms Control instruments to the current security environment. We remain strong supporters of full implementation and a substantial modernisation of the Vienna Document and we welcome proposals on all Vienna Document chapters aimed at strengthening its provisions. We also value voluntary briefings in the FSC, which also aim to increase transparency, dispel concerns and strengthen confidence between OSCE participating States, whilst noting that these briefings cannot be a substitute for mandatory transparency and reporting measures. Modern warfare is also reflected in military doctrines which are the basis for military capabilities, postures and readiness, and we welcome the inter-sessional OSCE Dialogue on Military Doctrines organised at Austria's initiative in April.

Furthermore, we want to recall the commitment of all participating States in Hamburg to work towards creating an environment conducive to reinvigorating arms control and CSBMs in Europe and to full implementation and further development of arms control agreements, as essential for enhancing military and political stability within the OSCE area.

Mr. Chairman, turning to the topic of hybrid threats, we would like to share the EU experience in tackling this challenge. Hybrid threats combine conventional and unconventional, military and non-military activities that are used in a coordinated manner by state or non-state actors to achieve specific political objectives. Hybrid threats can range from cyberattacks on critical information systems or the disruption of critical services, through undermining of public trust in government institutions and the deepening of social divisions to covert military incursion.

Awareness, resilience and response are at the heart of EU action to counter hybrid threats. We are improving our capacity to detect malicious activities and to enhance the resilience of our critical infrastructure, our societies and institutions. Hybrid threats represent a challenge not only for the EU but also for other major partner organisations including the UN, OSCE and NATO. When the EU and NATO agreed to enhance their cooperation at the Warsaw Summit in 2016, countering hybrid threats was identified as one of the most prominent fields of cooperation. In September 2018, the informal meeting of the EU PSC with the NAC included a hybrid scenario-based discussion. The creation of the European Centre of Excellence for Countering Hybrid Threats, represented today by Director Saarelainen, as well as the creation of the EU Hybrid Fusion Cell, are just two examples of actions identified and implemented since the adoption of the Joint Framework on Countering Hybrid Threats in 2016. A number of OSCE participating States are members of the European Centre of Excellence for Countering Hybrid Threats in Helsinki.

The spread of deliberate, large-scale, and systematic disinformation, including as part of hybrid warfare, is an acute and strategic challenge for our democratic systems and requires an urgent response in full respect of human rights and fundamental freedoms. This is why the December 2018 European Council stressed the need for a determined response and endorsed the Action Plan against Disinformation which sets out key actions to tackle disinformation. It also highlights measures to be taken as a matter of priority by different actors

ahead of the 2019 European Parliament elections and with a view to more than 50 presidential, national or local/regional elections being held in Member States by 2020. Member States should build their own resilience, and act together in defending the European Union against hybrid attacks, including attacks using disinformation. We should also be ready to counter expected disinformation ahead of the 10th anniversary of the Eastern Partnership initiative.

According to reports, included in the Action Plan against Disinformation, more than 30 countries are using disinformation and influencing activities in different forms, including in their own countries. According to the EU Hybrid Fusion Cell, disinformation by the Russian Federation poses the greatest threat to the EU. However, other third countries as well as non-state actors also deploy disinformation strategies. In 2015 the European External Action Service East Stratcom Task Force was set up to challenge Russia's ongoing disinformation campaigns; the results of the work of the task force can be found under the link: <https://euvsdisinfo.eu>.

More remains to be done to counter the challenges posed by Russia and other actors. EU action in building resilience will continue, as the nature of hybrid threats evolves, as exemplified for instance by Sweden's "total defence strategy".

In the long-term, the objective is for the EU and its neighbourhood to become more resilient against hybrid threats and disinformation. This requires continuous and sustained efforts to support education and media literacy, journalism and civil society as a whole.

Since modern warfare, including hybrid threats and countering disinformation, represent a challenge for all participating States, we see merit in continuing discussion on this topic in the FSC.

Thank you for your attention.

The Candidate Countries the FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF 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 and GEORGIA align themselves with this statement.

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