



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Forum for Security Co-operation No 801 Vienna, 28 October 2015

EU Statement on Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security

The Member States of the European Union would like to thank the Norwegian FSC Chair for inviting Dr. Hans Born and Mr. William McDermott from the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF), Mr. Roald Linaker, Ombudsman for the Armed Forces of Norway, and Mr. Bjørn A. Gahre, Director for the Parliamentary Ombudsman for the Norwegian Armed Forces to today's FSC Security Dialogue on the OSCE Code of Conduct on Politico Military Aspects of Security.

We remain strong supporters of the OSCE Code of Conduct and attach great importance to the full implementation of the norms and principles stipulated in the Code of Conduct, be they related to interstate relations or, inter alia, to respecting international humanitarian law, ensuring democratic control of the armed and security forces and protection of the rights of armed forces personnel.

Under the current circumstances, ensuring strict implementation of the OSCE politico-military commitments including the provisions of the Code of Conduct, in letter and spirit, by all participating States, in order to further de-escalate and to reach a peaceful solution to the crises in and around Ukraine, based on full respect for Ukraine's independence, sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity, continues to remain for us the top priority.

The central role which the Ombuds institutions play in the security sector by overseeing the armed forces is vital in ensuring that the armed forces and its members operate in a transparent and accountable manner. As such the Ombuds institutions represent an important feature of democracy and democratic control of the armed forces.

We would like to thank ODIHR and DCAF for elaborating and recently publishing a "*Mapping Study: Ombuds Institutions for the Armed Forces in the OSCE Region*", which examines the different models, functions and approaches of Ombuds institutions for the armed forces in the OSCE region. Due to the fact that the annual information exchanges are not qualitatively assessed and analysed, which we continue to regret, this study provides a very appreciated and valuable insight on how an important part of the Code of Conduct is being implemented.

We appreciate the important role ODIHR plays in monitoring the implementation of the OSCE human dimension commitments, promoting and strengthening human rights, the rule-of-law and democratic institutions, including the ombuds institutions. We support and encourage further co-operation of ODIHR and the FSC in promoting principles and sharing best practices between participating States in order to ensure that human rights of armed and security forces personnel are respected in the whole OSCE area.

We also commend the continued interest and efforts of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly in promoting and supporting implementation of the Code of Conduct, including through the adoption of the OSCE Parliamentary Resolution entitled “*OSCE Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security: Awareness raising, dissemination, better implementation and outreach*” at the last Annual Session in Helsinki in July this year. We thank Ambassador Andreas Nothelle for his today’s statement and his personal engagement to bolster the Code of Conduct and foster its implementation.

We concur with one of the principle conclusions of this year’s Annual Discussion on the implementation of the Code of Conduct, that implementation of the Code of Conduct should be further strengthened and additional efforts are needed in order to improve the overall quality of reporting. We therefore support the efforts of the FSC Chair, the Secretariat and the FSC Co-ordinator on the Code of Conduct to address deficiencies in its implementation and reporting on the Code of Conduct, utilising available mechanisms, including e.g. through enhanced co-operation with OSCE field operations, where appropriate and applicable.

We welcome and support voluntary reporting of additional information within the annual information exchange on the Code of Conduct on issues related to women, peace and security (UNSCR 1325), as well as on private and military security companies, and encourage all participating States to consider providing such additional information on a voluntary basis.

Last, but not least, we would also like to thank the representative of Serbia for the comprehensive presentation on the outcomes of the Workshop on the Code of Conduct, which was co-organised by Switzerland and Serbia in Belgrade two weeks ago.

The Workshop has clearly shown continued interest of participating States as well as OSCE Partners for Co-operation to further promote the implementation of the Code of Conduct, thus confirming not only its indispensable value in general, but also the need for the continuation of outreach activities in promoting the norms and principles stipulated in the Code of Conduct beyond the OSCE area. We believe that such activities merit our continued support and attention.

The Candidate Countries the FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO*, ICELAND+ and ALBANIA*, the Country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and Potential Candidate BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA, and the EFTA country LIECHTENSTEIN, member 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.

+ Iceland continues to be a member of the EFTA and of the European Economic Area.