



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Forum for Security Co-operation N°1149 Vienna, 14 October 2026

EU Statement on OSCE Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security: Strengthening Implementation and Accountability Mechanisms

1. Mr Chair, we thank the United Kingdom for selecting the topic of the OSCE Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security for today's Security Dialogue. We also thank the invited speakers for their stimulating presentations. Your specific focus on exploring ways to further support implementation of key provisions of the Code along with enhancing accountability is very timely. Unfortunately, as a result of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine this issue has a drastic direct impact on the daily lives of citizens and is therefore particularly topical.
2. It is in the common interest of all OSCE participating States to ensure the full observance of International Humanitarian Law (IHL) including the Law of Armed Conflict (LOAC). In this context, the importance of strengthening implementation of the Code of Conduct cannot be emphasised enough. This key part of our existing OSCE acquis addresses amongst others the issue of democratic control of the armed forces and emphasises the principles of IHL in the use of force. In view of today's discussion, we would in particular highlight paragraphs 31 and 34.
3. Paragraph 31 holds armed forces personnel accountable for violations and abuses of International Humanitarian Law. In consenting to the Code of Conduct, participating States pledged to assume the responsibility to ensure that their armed forces personnel vested with command authority exercise it in accordance with relevant national and international law and are made aware that they can be held individually accountable under those laws for the unlawful exercise of such authority. The Code stipulates that no order contrary to national or international law may be given. The responsibility of superiors does not exempt subordinates from any of their individual responsibilities.
4. Furthermore, the Code's paragraph 34 specifies that each participating State will ensure that in peace time and in war, its armed forces are commanded, manned, trained and equipped in ways that are consistent with the provisions of international

law and its respective obligations and commitments related to the use of armed forces in armed conflict.

5. We have heard here today how the development of educational measures, involving training on IHL including LOAC is crucial. Additionally, in 2021, the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights together with the Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance published its compendium of standards, good practices and recommendations related to human rights of armed forces personnel.
6. Reports including the Moscow Mechanism mission reports, ODIHR and UN reports documented clear patterns of serious International Humanitarian Law violations committed by Russian forces. It must be ensured that each violation is properly investigated and prosecuted with a victim-centered approach. We urge Russia to stop breaching the Code of Conduct and fulfil its obligations in accordance with International Humanitarian Law and the Code.
7. The EU and its Members States reiterate that we will continue to further support implementation of provisions of the Code along with enhancing accountability mechanisms. We reiterate our steadfast commitment to uphold International Humanitarian Law, and to end impunity for international crimes.
8. Mr Chair, we have certainly not exhausted the discussion on this topic. We look forward to engaging further here at the FSC in order to strengthen implementation of the Code as a living instrument responsive to contemporary security challenges within the OSCE area.

Thank you for the opportunity to exchange perspectives on this important subject.

Albania, Andorra, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Republic of Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Norway, San Marino, and Ukraine align themselves with this statement.