



## EUROPEAN UNION

### **OSCE Permanent Council No. 1290 Vienna, 19 November 2020**

#### **EU Statement in response to the report by Dr. Volker Frobarth, OSCE Representative to the Latvian-Russian Joint Commission on Military Pensioners**

The EU warmly welcomes the OSCE Representative to the Latvian-Russian Joint Commission on Military Pensioners Dr. Volker Frobarth to the Permanent Council, even though this time in a virtual manner.

We thank you for your report, distributed well ahead of time, indicating that during the past twelve months of the reporting period only very few issues have remained on the agenda.

We take note that from the time of the signing of the bilateral agreement on 30 April 1994 the number of eligible personnel has decreased from 22 320 to 5 994 as of 28 October 2020, 526 less than one year ago.

Considering that the average age of the military pensioners has reached 80 years of age, we concur with you that it is particularly pleasing that no Covid-19 cases among the military pensioners have yet been reported.

You highlight that your work and that of the Latvian-Russian Joint Commission on Military Pensioners has been affected by the Covid-19 pandemic. Due to the travel restrictions, probably there will be no meetings in person this year. In light of this, we appreciate your regular telephone exchanges with the Russian and Latvian sides during this extraordinary time.

We welcome that as in previous years no individual complaints by military pensioners have been made.

We regret that, as last year, the annual fixing of the Russian reimbursement for medical care expenses for military pensioners is still unresolved and no particular progress has been made.

You state that there have been no new fundamental issues concerning the work of the Representative. However, future individual complaints from military pensioners cannot be ruled out. We therefore share your conclusion that the function of a Representative should continue to exist on a “stand by” basis, acting only if requested and requiring only minor resources.

In conclusion, we thank you for your engagement over the past year and we wish you a positive continuation of your work.

The Candidate Countries REPUBLIC of NORTH MACEDONIA\*, MONTENEGRO\*, SERBIA\* and ALBANIA\*, and the EFTA countries ICELAND and LIECHTENSTEIN, members of the European Economic Area, as well as UKRAINE and GEORGIA align themselves with this statement.

\* Republic of North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.