



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Forum for Security Co-operation N°914 Vienna, 8 May 2019

EU Statement in response to Mr. Zohir Saidzoda, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Tajikistan

The European Union and its Member States warmly welcome H.E. Mr. Zohir Saidzoda, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Tajikistan, to the Forum for Security Co-operation and thank him for outlining the priorities of the Tajik FSC Chairmanship. We would like to thank you, Mr. Deputy Minister, for presenting a comprehensive agenda for the Tajik FSC Chairmanship. You can count on our support. We look forward to discussions on topics of high relevance for Central Asia, including the challenges this region is facing. We stand ready to contribute to our deliberations by sharing the EU perspective and policies.

We would also like to use the opportunity to once again thank the Swiss FSC Chairmanship for its able leadership during the first trimester of 2019 and to welcome the Czech Republic as a new Troika member.

Mr. Chairman, Tajikistan assumes the FSC Chairmanship against the background of the clear violations of the rules based international order of which OSCE politico-military instruments form a key part. We strongly condemn the clear violation of Ukrainian sovereignty and territorial integrity by acts of aggression by the Russian armed forces since February 2014 and the illegal annexation of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol to the Russian Federation, which we will not recognise. We reiterate our well-known position on the unjustified use of force by Russia at the Kerch Strait on 25 November 2018 and its negative impact in the Azov Sea and Russia's violations of international law. The increasing militarisation of

Crimea continues to impact negatively the security situation in the Black Sea region. We condemn the downing of an SMM Long Range UAV on 19 April after it experienced GPS signal jamming and reiterate our call for full, safe and unhindered access throughout Ukraine for the SMM and its technical assets. We also condemn the Russian decrees signed on 24 April and 1 May, concerning expedited Russian passports for Ukrainian citizens residing in areas of Donetsk and Luhansk regions controlled by Russia-backed armed formations or formerly resident in Crimea. These decrees are a further attack on Ukrainian sovereignty by Russia and clearly show Russia's intention to further destabilise Ukraine. We take this opportunity to recall our unwavering support to the sovereignty, territorial integrity, unity and independence of Ukraine within its internationally recognised borders.

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 look forward to a dedicated session on Convention Arms Control and Confidence and Security Building Measures (CAC/CSBMs) at this year's ASRC as well as to the FSC session on CSBMs bringing to our attention also the Central Asian perspective. 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. In this context, we look forward to continuing our discussions on concrete VD+ proposals at the Working Group 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 commend the Chair of the Informal Working Group Structured Dialogue for convening the first substantial discussion earlier this week focused on strengthening military transparency, risk reduction and incident prevention, better implementation of our existing tools and military exercises - topics of high importance to the EU and its Member States, as well as several other delegations around this table. We look forward to continuing these important

discussions in the future in the framework of the IWG, as well as during the joint FSC-PC and a dedicated session of the ASRC.

Mr. Chairman, we appreciate the choice of topics for your FSC Chairmanship. 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 Small Arms and Light Weapons (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 during your tenure. Discussion on regional cooperation in Central Asia will provide us a welcome opportunity to present the new EU-Central Asia strategy. We commend you for devoting a meeting to the implementation of UNSCR 1540 and a dedicated session to the women, peace and security agenda. We equally look forward to the 8th Annual Implementation Discussion on the Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security and we strongly recommend representatives of participating States to attend the regional seminar on the Code of Conduct in Larnaca.

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 NORTH MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO* and ALBANIA*, 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.

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