



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Forum for Security Co-operation Nr 792 Vienna, 17 June 2015

EU Statement on the Effectiveness of the Vienna Document Regime and Regional CSBMs in Crisis Situations

The European Union (EU) and its Member States warmly welcome today's speakers to the Forum for Security Cooperation and thank them for the interesting and thought provoking presentations on the effectiveness of the Vienna Document (VD) regime and regional Confidence and Security-Building Measures (CSBMs) in crisis situations.

We would like to recall from the outset that Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea and Sevastopol and destabilising actions in eastern Ukraine challenge our security. At the same time, the crisis in and around Ukraine strongly reminds us of the significant role the Vienna Document and its broad set of CSBMs could play not only in confidence-building but also in early warning and risk reduction, if duly implemented. This is equally true for other instruments pertaining to the OSCE politico-military dimension of security as well as for the FSC itself as a platform for cooperative security and dialogue.

Against this background, we see the full implementation, updating and modernisation of the existing OSCE commitments in the politico-military area, based on founding OSCE principles and agreed norms, as a priority task. We reiterate that such process should reflect the experience and lessons learned during the Ukraine crisis.

We believe that despite fundamental differences in the analysis of the crisis, a common set of conclusions on what is needed to strengthen the Vienna Document could be conceivable. We call on all participating States to redouble their efforts in this respect, notably in view of the reissuing of the Vienna Document in 2016. Valuable ideas have been gathered over years but a substantive and balanced modernisation package remains to be agreed.

In the current circumstances, a commitment to strengthen the Vienna Document doubtlessly requires political will. However, a more resilient document in times of crises will yield long-term security gains for all participating States outweighing the political reservations that have paralysed the dialogue on updating the Vienna Document to this day.

This is why we support discussions aimed at identifying ways to improve specific provisions of the Vienna Document in the light of the crisis in and around Ukraine. In this context, we welcome the FFT paper on reinvigorating the dialogue on the VD Chapter III, circulated by Greece, and remain ready to take an active part in the discussions within a dedicated format.

We equally support continued general discussions on conventional arms control under the FSC Security Dialogue. Such discussions should be coherent with related activities, create added value and avoid duplication with other formats. We highly appreciate today's Security Dialogue contribution to this end as well as the impetus given by the Helsinki+40 coordinator during the last Security Dialogue devoted to the same topic.

With regard to the presentation by Major General Michele Torres, former Personal Representative of the Chairperson-in-Office for Article IV Agreement, we reiterate with satisfaction that under his mandate the second phase of the ownership process has been successfully fulfilled, thus paving the way for the full transfer of ownership to the State Parties. We thank General Torres and his team for their outstanding personal engagement.

We see this important achievement as being the outcome of the consistent efforts and political will of the State Parties, ably assisted by the CIO Personal Representative, to re-build security in the aftermath of a terrible war. Article IV Agreement is in that way a compelling example of how military confidence-building and mutual trust and transparency could underpin long term peace and stability.

This is the reason why we continue to strongly believe that this important sub-regional arms control regime remains a positive model to be emulated in other sub-regions in the Euro-Atlantic area. We take this occasion to restate our strong support

to the State Parties for continuing the implementation of Article IV Agreement in good faith.

In concluding, let us reiterate our understanding that CAC and CSBMs regimes are not designed to solve conflicts. Conventional arms control first and foremost enhances predictability and, by reducing different threat perceptions, contributes to security, stability and mutual trust. Strong CAC regimes can thereby support political solutions.

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 countries LIECHTENSTEIN and NORWAY, members of the European Economic Area, as well as UKRAINE and SAN MARINO 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 EFTA and the European Economic Area.