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EU Statement on Conventional Arms Control in Europe

The European Union (EU) and its Member States would like to thank the FSC Chairmanship Lithuania for organising this Security Dialogue on arms control in Europe. It provides a useful opportunity for discussion on the ongoing challenges in relation to conventional arms control and Confidence- and Security-Building Measures (CSBMs) and how best to take this issue forward in realising the vision of a comprehensive, cooperative and indivisible Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian security community. We would also like to welcome and thank today's presenters, Dr Heinz Gärtner from Austria and Dr Sergiy Galaka from Ukraine, for their interesting analysis concerning this topic.

We emphasise the importance of strengthening and modernising conventional arms control and CSBMs, as essential elements of our security community. These instruments should be brought into conformity with the current military and security conditions. We consider that a modern, functional conventional arms control regime that provides verifiable transparency of armed forces is vital for the security and stability of the whole Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian area.

We view the existing commitments on CSBMs and arms control regimes, as set out in Astana, Vilnius and other relevant OSCE documents, to be not just a valid basis for the work of the FSC in 2013 but also in need of further progression.

To that end we are in favour of general and strategic discussions on conventional arms control in the framework of the FSC Security Dialogue and thank Ukraine for having initiated this process through their food for thought paper. As we stated earlier this year such discussions should be

coherent with related activities and possibly Helsinki + 40 developments, create added value and avoid duplication with other formats.

We would also like to reiterate our readiness to pursue both a pragmatic and forward looking approach to the substantial modernisation of the Vienna Document aiming to assure its continued relevance for increasing military stability, transparency and predictability for all participating States. Accordingly we are ready to actively contribute to the VD modernisation process by giving careful consideration to all VD+ proposals tabled so far, as well as others yet to be presented.

We are convinced that future work on arms control should address new developments in the field of conventional military force posture and policy as well as enhancing transparency, openness and co-operation in the military field.

To conclude, we would like to thank again the speakers and the FSC Chairmanship for providing us with the opportunity to exchange views on conventional arms control in Europe.

The acceding country CROATIA^{*}, the candidate countries the FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA, MONTENEGRO, ICELAND^{**} and SERBIA, the countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate countries ALBANIA and BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA, the European Free Trade Association countries LIECHTENSTEIN and NORWAY, members of the European Economic Area, as well as UKRAINE, the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA, ARMENIA and SAN MARINO align themselves with this statement.

^{*} Croatia, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.

^{**} Iceland continues to be a member of EFTA and the European Economic Area.