EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Forum for Security Co-operation N°848
Vienna, 15 March 2017

EU Statement on Multidimensional Security of the Black Sea

The European Union and its Member States warmly welcome the speakers to the Forum for Security Co-operation, and thank them for their interesting presentations. We commend the Romanian FSC Chair for continuing the tradition of devoting our security dialogues to regional security issues. Today´s discussion is timely and pertinent given the current security environment and we have listened with interest to the interventions outlining achievements and challenges in the context of regional cooperation in the Black Sea region.

Mr. Chairman, today, we were again reminded of the multifaceted security environment we are all facing. Key challenges to peace and stability underscore the need for the EU to adapt and improve its capacities as a security provider: The 2016 Global Strategy on the EU´s Foreign and Security Policy provides a framework for united and responsible external engagement in partnership with others to advance its values and interests. Strengthening resilience of states and societies to our East and South, promoting and supporting cooperative regional arrangements, as well as reinforcing global governance based on international law, including the principles of the UN Charter, and the Helsinki Final Act, are main priorities for the EU´s external action identified in the strategy.

Even if protracted conflicts in the wider Black Sea region have challenged the core of the European security order, the EU will stand united in upholding international law, democracy, human rights, cooperation and each country's right to choose its future freely. Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea and its destabilising actions in eastern Ukraine have impacted on the EU's policies and programmes, also in the Black Sea region. Despite the political instability, the EU will proceed with regional cooperation in the Black Sea, by re-assessing on-going cooperation frameworks and initiatives

and calibrating future ones to meet the EU policy of non-recognition of Crimea´s annexation.

In this context, Black Sea Synergy remains the main policy framework for the EU's actions regarding the Black Sea region. This policy framework aims to focus political attention on the Black Sea region and develop cooperation within the region, and between the region as a whole and the EU. It is by definition flexible and inclusive, aiming at the participation of all states in the region. Its scope is building confidence and fostering regional dialogue. Cooperation and engagement with regional organisations in the region, including the Black Sea Commission and Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organisation (BSEC), will also remain an important feature of EU´s policy towards the region.

Mr. Chairman, building trust and confidence through cooperation is at the heart of basic OSCE principles and commitments, including in the politico-military sphere. Their full implementation by all participating States in good faith is crucial for increasing military security and stability. The Vienna Document plays a key role in this regard with its transparency measures aimed at enhancing trust and ensuring predictability.

We appreciate the first-hand information and experience shared with us today on Confidence- and Security-Building Measures of the Black Sea littoral states in the naval field.

Finally, we once again thank the Chair for providing us with the opportunity to exchange views on this interesting topic.

The Candidate Countries the FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO* and ALBANIA*, the Country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and Potential Candidate BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA as well as the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA, GEORGIA 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.