



## **EUROPEAN UNION**

### **OSCE Annual Security Review Conference**

#### **Working session III - 'Conventional arms control and confidence and security building measures: challenges and opportunities'**

**Vienna, 25 June 2020**

The European Union and its Member States would like to thank the Chairmanship, as well as the coordinator and key-note speakers, for this useful opportunity to discuss and assess conventional arms control and confidence and security building measures.

We regret that this Annual Security Review Conference takes place against the background of the ongoing conflicts in the OSCE area. For the seventh consecutive year, Russia's acts of aggression against Ukraine and its annexation of Crimea continue to challenge European security and raise serious concerns. We reiterate our full support to the international diplomatic efforts within the Normandy Format and the Trilateral Contact Group to address these concerns. This reminds us of, and underscores, the crucial value of the Confidence and Security Building Measures, in particular those enshrined in the Vienna Document 2011. These need to be implemented fully and in good faith, and when appropriate modernised, so that challenges to the current European security environment are better met by increased transparency and predictability.

OSCE's comprehensive and co-operative concept of security with emphasis on Conventional Arms Control, Confidence and Security Building Measures, disarmament and non-proliferation, constitutes an important element of our common security. These fundamental and enduring commitments provide systemic and preventive means to enhance predictability and transparency. In so doing, they can contribute to reducing

military risks and misperceptions, lead to a better understanding of threat perceptions and build trust among participating States.

Important agreements in this area, including the Vienna Document, the Treaty on Open Skies and the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe have provided us with important security gains for many years and remain crucial CSBM instruments. We support efforts to solve outstanding issues pertaining to compliance with and implementation of these instruments, which are complementary. We reiterate our enduring support for the pending application of the Republic of Cyprus to accede to the Treaty on Open Skies. We are concerned about the situation regarding the Open Skies Treaty, which is one of the three pillars of our arms control architecture and serves as a vital confidence and security building measure. We call on Russia to comply with its commitments under the Treaty. We take note of the US decision but are deeply concerned about the effects on the functioning of the Treaty in the case of a possible withdrawal. We hope that the US will reconsider its decision.

We remain committed to the full implementation in letter and spirit of existing commitments in the politico-military dimension and continue to support the substantial modernisation of the Vienna Document, as well as the further development of Conventional Arms Control, Confidence and Security Building Measures and other instruments in the politico-military toolbox. We stand ready to work towards creating an environment conducive to reinvigorating Conventional Arms Control and CSBMs in Europe.

We consider that there is an urgent need for the resumption of inspection and verification activities related to these instruments. In the framework of the Covid-19 pandemic, we managed to co-ordinate the suspension of these activities and now need to further collaborate to resume their implementation.

At relevant OSCE meetings the EU and its Member States have been clear and consistent in calling for a substantial modernisation of the Vienna Document. We welcome and support all proposals on various VD chapters aimed at strengthening its provisions and adapting it to the current security environment. In this context we see the Joint Proposal for a VD Plus Draft Decision as an opportunity to launch a constructive negotiation. We view this proposal in a positive light. It reflects common concerns about growing unpredictability and mistrust in the European security environment and the urgent need to reverse this trend. We understand that this proposal is intended to create a positive momentum for modernisation of the Vienna

Document and the confidence we place in the OSCE as the key platform for mutual dialogue on security issues. This new proposal together with other proposals will be a basis for negotiation that all participating States will be able to work on. Negotiation and engagement by all participating States is a path to rebuilding trust and confidence.

We urge all participating States to engage actively and constructively in these important discussions to increase military transparency and reduce risk by working with us to update the Vienna Document.

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

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