



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Forum for Security Co-operation N°988 Vienna, 13 October 2021

EU Statement on “mil to mil contacts on doctrines”

The European Union and its Member States thank the Austrian FSC Chair for dedicating today’s Security Dialogue to the issue of mil-to-mil contacts on doctrines. We warmly welcome our distinguished key-note speakers and thank them for sharing their considerations on this very important topic.

The Forum for Security Co-operation is a valuable platform for addressing security challenges in the OSCE region. In this context, we welcome the high-level military doctrine seminars, which take place every five years and are designed to foster an exchange on the evolution of doctrines and to promote mil-to-mil contacts between the participating States. These meetings, held in accordance with the Vienna Document at the level of Chiefs of Defence, are a unique occasion for open and frank exchanges on strategic challenges and military doctrines within the OSCE.

We recall the latest High-Level Military Doctrine Seminar on doctrinal changes and their impact on defence structures, organised in February by the US FSC Chair. This was a valued opportunity to address a wide range of security challenges faced by participating States against the background of the visible degradation of the security situation in the OSCE area.

Mr. Chair, many factors influence the evolution of military doctrines. On one side we face increased international tensions, violations of international law, non-implementation or selective implementation of undertaken commitments, activities below the threshold of conflict, destabilising capabilities, and on the other, digitalisation, technological development and globalisation. We are convinced that

transparency remains key in order to prevent escalation and, in consequence, to rebuild trust.

Today's security requires both a whole-of-government approach and effective international co-operation. The exchange among military experts in the HLMDS framework on joint co-operative measures, including military transparency, risk reduction and building of trust as well as when combating transnational threats, terrorism or, for example, the current pandemic are important in many aspects. Mil-to-mil discussions may contribute to reassurance with regard to a country's defence posture by providing transparency and openness on force postures and force developments. We recall that the Structured Dialogue also plays an important role in furthering mil-to-mil contacts.

We believe that military dialogues, such as the High-Level Military Doctrine Seminar or the Expert Level Workshops of the Structured Dialogue, play a part in easing political tensions and reducing the potential for conflict. As the HLMDS take place only every five years, more regular meetings and exchanges among high-ranking military staff would be beneficial for mutual understanding and international military co-operation. They certainly provide a perspective on ongoing adjustments and help to reduce perceived threats. It is important that all participating States genuinely engage in the mil-to-mil dialogue, and also on subjects they disagree on. As this is an issue of relevance beyond the OSCE area, we would also encourage active participation of the OSCE partners for cooperation.

Last but not least, it is important that we continue to pay due attention to the evolution of military doctrines, including under the auspices of their consistency with the OSCE Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security, especially with regard to the implications for democratic control of the military as well as on measures by security forces to implement the women, peace and security commitments of UNSCR 1325.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Candidate Countries the REPUBLIC of NORTH MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO*, SERBIA* and ALBANIA*, the Country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and

Potential Candidate BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA, and the EFTA countries ICELAND, LIECHTENSTEIN and NORWAY, members of the European Economic Area, as well as UKRAINE, the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA and SAN MARINO align themselves with this statement.

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