

**EUROPEAN UNION****OSCE Annual Security Review Conference
Vienna, 26-28 June 2018**

EU Statement on “Special Meeting of the Structured Dialogue”

The European Union and its Member States would like to thank the Italian Chairmanship for organising this Special Session of the Structured Dialogue. We highly value the Structured Dialogue, which we are ready to develop further in accordance with the Hamburg Declaration.

We would also like to thank Ambassador Huynen for his assessment on the outcomes of the 2nd Expert Level Workshop on Trends in Military Forces and Exercises, which was organised on 3-4 May 2018 in Vienna, as well as the key note speaker for his interesting and informative presentation.

Mr. Chairman, we concur with many views voiced during the IWG meetings and joint FSC/PC meetings on the Structured Dialogue: We share serious concerns over Russia's aggression against Ukraine and the illegal annexation of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol. We are also concerned about large scale and snap military exercises, hazardous and dangerous military incidents, military deployments in the vicinity of international borders, as well as a selective approach to the implementation of OSCE's politico-military commitments. It is essential to restore full respect for international law and fundamental OSCE principles by all participating States. The IWG Structured Dialogue is a useful platform for in-depth exchanges on these issues and we should continue in this endeavour. We once again emphasize the need to work towards creating an environment conducive to reinvigorating Conventional Arms Control and CSBMs. We support the focus put on risk reduction and de-escalation in 2018, and we are committed to increasing military transparency, predictability and political stability in the OSCE area. We support a continuation of the process to map relevant military trends, force postures and exercises. We also look forward to further discussions on threat perceptions raised by the participating States including, given their relevance,

those resulting from conflicts.

Referring to the EU statement made at the Special Session of the joint FSC/PC on 6 June 2018, we would like to highlight and elaborate on some elements today.

As today's session touches upon the outcomes of the 2nd Workshop on Trends in Military Forces and Exercises, let me start by underlining that we support the continuation of the process to examine trends related to military forces, major equipment, expenditure, deployments and exercises. As a number of elements from the 2nd Workshop deserve our further attention, we are ready to continue our dialogue, notably taking into account the elements listed in the perception paper. We would like to mention here some of those elements, which could be discussed and examined in more detail in future expert level workshops in the framework of Structured Dialogue, such as best practices on how to fill in the AEMI and/or GEMI reports on military data, the list of major weapon and equipment systems, the aspect of intent, the visualization of data, military incidents, as well as military activities in the vicinity of borders, and military expenditure. This list is by no means exhaustive.

Turning to the second main topic of today's session, namely military incidents and their prevention, we would like to stress our view that the OSCE and multilateral instruments can have a key role to play in reducing the risk of misunderstanding and escalation. We reiterate our support for discussions on best practices on risk reduction measures and on practical tools and mechanisms for incident prevention and management to minimise risks and reduce escalatory potential. These could include measures, such as fact-finding and transparency, better communication channels, including military ones, and enhanced military-to-military contacts, where appropriate. Furthermore, with regard to incidents on and over the High Seas, we would like to express our readiness to examine further best practices to prevent incidents at sea including exercising restraint to avoid a serious confrontation. Furthermore, it is of utmost importance to improve safety and promote risk reduction regarding military flights through appropriate confidence building measures, like good airmanship and flight patterns. In the upcoming IWG meetings, we could also examine existing best practices in the area of flight safety. The idea for the IWG chair to collect suggestions made on risk reduction is worth exploring further.

We remain committed to the full implementation in letter and spirit of existing commitments in the politico-military area and continue to support the substantial

modernisation of the Vienna Document, including the risk reduction measures, as well as the further development of Conventional Arms Control, Confidence and Security Building Measures and other instruments in the politico-military area.

Finally, we would like to encourage you, Ambassador Huynen, to continue in your important task and we assure you of our full support.

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, and the EFTA countries ICELAND and LIECHTENSTEIN, members of the European Economic Area, as well as UKRAINE, the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA, ANDORRA 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.