



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Forum for Security Co-operation N°852 Vienna, 10 May 2017

EU Statement in response to the SCO – Multifaceted Interaction for the sake of Peace, Prosperity and Stability

The European Union and its Member States thank the speakers for their presentations and the Russian FSC Chairmanship for drawing the attention of the Forum to the work of the Shanghai Co-operation Organisation and its interaction with other regional organisations.

In this context we underline the important role of the OSCE, as a regional arrangement under Chapter VIII of the UN Charter, in advancing peace and security in Europe. The OSCE, as a multilateral forum for dialogue and negotiation, has led over the years to a number of key commitments across all three dimensions, including fundamental politico-military agreements notably the Conventional Armed Forces in Europe Treaty, the Open Skies Treaty, the Vienna Document, and the Code of Conduct on Politico-military Aspects of Security. Their full implementation by all participating States is crucial for increasing military security and stability in the OSCE region. At the same time, given the evolving security environment and technological developments in the military sphere, genuine dialogue and action to update and modernise existing politico-military commitments is more necessary than ever. In this regard, we note that there are a number of concrete proposals to modernise the Vienna Document which have already gained substantial support amongst OSCE participating States, and which could reduce military risk, and increase military transparency and predictability. We call for continued efforts to modernise existing politico- military commitments, including in the framework of the structured dialogue as provided for by the MC declaration from Lisbon to Hamburg adopted last year, with the aim to restore trust and confidence in the OSCE area.

Furthermore, we highly value the role of the OSCE in conflict prevention. With its network of field operations, the OSCE possesses a variety of institutions and tools for early warning and early action.

In the spirit of experience sharing, as called for by many around this table, we would also like to present the EU's approach to key challenges to peace and stability. The European Union itself was created in response to a conflict, and as a way to make such conflicts among us impossible in the future. The multifaceted security challenges we currently face underscore the need for the EU to adapt and improve its capacities as a security provider. In a strategic reflection led by the High Representative, the EU Global Strategy was developed last year to guide the EU's global actions in the future.

The Strategy identifies five priorities for the EU's external action. The first priority, to build the security of our Union, implies stepping up efforts and defence against external threats including counterterrorism, cyber security as well as countering hybrid threats. Investing in the resilience of states and societies to our East and South, as well as an integrated approach to conflicts through a coherent use of all policies at the EU's disposal, are two important further priorities for the EU's external action.

The fourth priority is to support cooperative regional orders that offer States and peoples the opportunity to better manage security concerns. The Helsinki Final Act created such order in Europe. The sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of States, the inviolability of borders and the peaceful settlement of disputes are key elements of the European security order. These principles must be respected by all OSCE participating states and, where they are violated or challenged, must be restored. Moreover, the EU will protect its vital interests through the strengthening of a global order based on international law and generally accepted rules with effective multilateralism as its key principle and the United Nations at its core.

Finally, in line with the EU Global Strategy, in a more complex, connected and contested world, the EU will engage with others. In pursuit of our goals cooperation with partner countries, regional bodies and international organisations including the OSCE, the United Nations and NATO, will be essential.

The Candidate Countries the FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO*, SERBIA* and ALBANIA*, the Country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and Potential Candidate BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA, members of the European Economic Area, as well as UKRAINE, the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA and GEORGIA align themselves with this statement.

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