



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Annual Security Review Conference

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

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FINAL DRAFT (867 words)

1. 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.
2. We regret that this Annual Security Review Conference takes place against the backdrop of a number of ongoing conflicts in the OSCE area. For the eighth 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.
3. Mr. Chair, the EU and its Member States remain concerned about the recent heightened tensions resulting from Russia's unusual military activities at the eastern border of Ukraine and in illegally annexed Crimea. The refusal of the Russian Federation to engage in a meaningful dialogue under the Vienna

Document risk reduction mechanism was regrettable and did not contribute to efforts to de-escalate. While we took positive note of the announcement of the withdrawal of some Russian troops, we urge the Russian Federation to show much needed transparency in order to dispel tensions, including by providing information to the Forum for Security Cooperation on the process of withdrawal and on the remaining forces and equipment which appear to be substantial. We recall that transparency in the field of military activities is one of the main commitments to which all OSCE participating States have signed up to.

4. 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 recall the proposals for updating the Vienna Document, including the Joint Proposal co-sponsored by 34 participating States, and encourage all participating States to engage in constructive discussions focused on the Vienna Document's role in reducing the risks of conflict in the OSCE area by promoting transparency, predictability and stability. In this context, we recall the Joint Statement of 45 participating States at the Tirana Ministerial Council.
5. 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.
6. 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 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.

7. Mr. Chair, we continue to be concerned about the situation regarding the Open Skies Treaty, which serves as a vital confidence and security building measure. This situation is all the more regrettable as all States Parties to the Treaty, including the Russian Federation, have reaffirmed their support to the Treaty during the 4th Open Skies Review Conference, recognized the importance of its full implementation and agreed to discuss, in an open manner, all unresolved issues. We take note of both the US and Russia's decisions but are deeply concerned about the effects on the functioning of the Treaty.
8. We will continue to uphold, support, and further strengthen arms control and CSBMs, to reduce the risk of conflict, increase trust among OSCE participating States and contribute to greater openness and transparency in the field of military planning and activities, particularly in the current security environment. We will remain open to a meaningful dialogue and call on all participating States to engage constructively. We stand ready to work towards creating an environment conducive to reinvigorating Conventional Arms Control and CSBMs in Europe.
9. We firmly believe that the full implementation and further development of existing commitments in the pol-mil dimension is essential for enhancing military transparency and political stability in the OSCE area. Confidence and Security-Building Measures were never designed to solve conflicts; however, we believe that they certainly can reduce risk through increased transparency. Transparency depends on every participating State fully and faithfully implementing agreed CSBMs, providing accurate, reliable and timely information on its military forces and activities, honestly responding to requests for an explanation and being ready to dispel security concerns expressed by another participating State. A substantial update of the Vienna Document is also needed in this respect. We once again call on Russia to fully implement existing commitments and to work with us to update the Vienna Document.

10. 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, LIECHTENSTEIN and NORWAY, members of the European Economic Area, as well as the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA, GEORGIA and ANDORRA align themselves with this statement.

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