



EUROPEAN UNION

**OSCE Forum for Security Co-operation N°952
Vienna, 22 July 2020**

**EU Statement in response to the closing statement by H.E.
Andriy Taran, Minister of Defence of Ukraine**

The European Union and its Member States warmly welcome His Excellency Defence Minister of Ukraine Mr. Andriy Taran to the Forum for Security Cooperation and wish to thank him for his interesting presentation. We also take this opportunity to thank you, Ambassador Tsymbaliuk, and your able team for the tireless work done in chairing the FSC in the past trimester.

This was a challenging trimester in difficult times. Ukraine assumed the Chairmanship at a critical juncture, and amidst the COVID-19 crisis. The pandemic has heavily influenced our working methods. We commend your initiative to facilitate regular meetings via video streaming in order to allow the participating States to continue exchanges on a broad range of politico-military issues. These ranged from traditional topics, such as implementation of UNSCRs 1325 and 1540, and small arms and light weapons to new areas, reflecting current developments and specific experiences. You also tabled discussions on important regional security issues such as the security situation in the Black and Azov Seas. We appreciate your flexibility in putting the subject of COVID-related challenges on the agenda of the first security dialogue at the beginning of May.

We regret that blatant violations of international law and basic OSCE principles and commitments continue in the OSCE area. Our position on Russia's acts of aggression against Ukraine and the illegal annexation of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the City of Sevastopol, which we strongly condemn and do not recognise, is clear and consistent. Our support to the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine within its internationally recognised borders remains unwavering. We recalled our position on a weekly basis, here in this forum, and will continue to do so in the future. We once again urge all sides to comply with the commitments they have signed up to, as a sustainable

political solution to the conflict in eastern Ukraine can only be reached through full implementation of the Minsk agreements. We welcome continued international diplomatic efforts within the Normandy format and the Trilateral Contact Group. We wish to use this opportunity to commend once again the constructive approach of the Ukrainian leadership to put an end to this conflict and call on Russia to act likewise.

We remain committed to the full implementation in letter and spirit of existing commitments in the politico-military dimension, which is essential for enhancing military transparency and political stability in the OSCE area. To this end, we continue to support substantial modernisation of the Vienna Document, as well as further development of Conventional Arms Control, Confidence and Security Building Measures and other instruments in the politico-military toolbox. This is vital for increasing military stability, transparency and predictability. We thank you, Ambassador Tsymbaliuk, for the opportunity to discuss these issues during your Chairmanship. We welcome the proposals on strengthening the Vienna Document provisions and urge all participating States to engage both actively and constructively in these important discussions, taking due account of all VD modernisation proposals on the table, including the joint proposal supported by 34 participating States, and we reiterate that this is an open and inclusive process without a predetermined outcome. In these times of the COVID-19 pandemic it is of particular importance to show restraint and refrain from large scale or no-notice, snap-check military exercises and military deployments in the vicinity of international borders without adequate transparency.

At the same time, we want to recall the Ministerial commitment of all participating States, made in Hamburg in 2016, to work towards creating an environment conducive to reinvigorating arms control and Confidence and Security-Building Measures in Europe. We value the Structured Dialogue as a meaningful, transparent, inclusive, state-owned and state-driven process for in-depth exchanges on the current and future challenges and risks to security in the OSCE area and we will continue to actively support it.

We appreciate that the implementation of UNSCR 1325 on women, peace and security was discussed at a joint FSC-PC meeting during your tenure. It allowed us to exchange views and share best practices on how to strengthen gender equality and achieve greater participation of women in the security sector. The EU and its Member States

will continue to be global leaders on these issues, including in the OSCE context in particular, especially in light of the 20th anniversary of UNSCR 1325 later this year.

In conclusion, we look forward to the incoming German FSC Chairmanship whom we assure of our full support. We wish Germany a good restart after the recess and hope that we will then be able to resume meetings in person.

The Candidate Countries the 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, GEORGIA, ANDORRA and SAN MARINO align themselves with this statement.

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