



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Forum for Security Co-operation N°975 Vienna, 12 May 2021

EU Statement on challenges of new generation warfare

Mr. Chair, the European Union and its Member States warmly welcome the speakers to the Forum for Security Co-operation and thank them for their insightful presentations. We had an interesting exchange on a similar subject in September last year during the German FSC Chairmanship. We thank our Armenian colleagues for offering us another opportunity to discuss this challenging question at today's meeting.

The increasing speed of technological and scientific innovation is undeniably having an enormous impact on our societies and its repercussions are felt in almost every aspect of our lives. These rapid advances of science and technology can also be used for military applications. We should also bear in mind that new technologies can have a dual-use potential. While remaining vigilant, it is also important not to hamper progress in legitimate research and development.

Mr. Chair, we welcome the steady progress made over the past few years within relevant fora, such as the UN Group of Governmental Experts on Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems. We also recognise the attention being paid by some States to the issue of new technologies in other international fora.

Compliance with international humanitarian law is a key requirement that States and other parties to a conflict need to fulfil in any case. In this context, we recall that States already have an important tool at their disposal to establish whether or not any existing or new weapons system, can be developed, produced or used lawfully. We encourage

all States to conduct legal weapons reviews, as required by Article 36 of Additional Protocol I to the Geneva Conventions.

The use of new military technologies can create challenges and may influence threat perceptions. This is of particular importance to our Organization and to our instruments that have been developed to ensure dialogue, transparency and confidence building across the OSCE.

In this context, we wish to underline that the Vienna Document remains one of our key instruments in this area despite the recent strains. We underline the importance of its full implementation, in letter and spirit, and remain supporters of its substantial modernisation. We see benefit in voluntary briefings in the FSC, which also aim to increase transparency, dispel concerns and strengthen confidence between OSCE participating States. We encourage the principle of reciprocity and note that these briefings cannot be a substitute for mandatory transparency and reporting measures. Furthermore, we recall the Hamburg Declaration and value the Structured Dialogue on the current and future challenges and risks to security in the OSCE area as an opportunity to renew a meaningful exchange in this area. We also recall the strong commitment of the OSCE participating States to full implementation and further development of arms control agreements, which is essential for enhancing military and political stability within the OSCE area.

Thank you.

The Candidate Countries REPUBLIC of NORTH MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO* and ALBANIA*, the Country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and Potential Candidate BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA, the EFTA countries ICELAND, LIECHTENSTEIN and NORWAY, members of the European Economic Area, as well as UKRAINE, the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA, GEORGIA 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.