



EUROPEAN UNION

Tenth Annual Discussion on the Implementation of the Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security

Vienna, 16 June 2021

EU Statement at the Opening Session

The Member States of the European Union wish to thank Ambassador Armen **Papikyan**, Chairman of the FSC and Ambassador Tuula **Yrjölä**, Director of the Conflict Prevention Centre, for their introductory statements of the 10th Annual Discussion on the Implementation of the Code of Conduct. We attach great importance to this opportunity to have a hands-on discussion on how to improve the implementation of this landmark document committing participating States to provide for democratic oversight of their military, paramilitary, internal security forces, intelligence services and police forces.

The undisputable relevance of the principles stipulated in the Code, including the provisions guiding the relations between States, is even more evident today, more than twenty-five years after their adoption. Ensuring strict and verifiable implementation of OSCE politico-military commitments, including the provisions of the Code of Conduct, which are closely linked to those of the Helsinki Final Act, the Charter of Paris and the Helsinki Document 1992, in letter and spirit, by all participating States, remains a top priority for us.

Since the 1994 Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security is a politically binding document aimed at addressing the issue of democratic control of the armed forces, we still consider it to be a unique document, without parallels in other organizational frameworks at the time. It can also be seen as an early

expression of what is now referred to as Security Sector Governance and Security Sector Reform (SSG/R).

Mr. Chair, we will continue to support and to address issues related to improving deficiencies in the implementation and reporting on the Code of Conduct. We also support reporting within the annual information exchange, inter alia on topics related to Women Peace and Security agenda and, on a voluntary basis only, to Private Military and Security Companies.

We reiterate our strong position on the need to also assess the information exchange in qualitative terms. In this context, we support all initiatives, such as the organisation of peer reviews in regional settings, which significantly contribute to increasing transparency between pS.

The EU Member States pledge their full support for the efforts of the FSC Chair, the Secretariat and the FSC Co-ordinator on the Code of Conduct towards the implementation of FSC Decision 1/08 on the Code of Conduct's Awareness Raising and Outreach Activities. Indeed, outreach activities promoting the principles and norms stipulated in the Code of Conduct outside the OSCE area, especially with OSCE Partners for Co-operation, constitute a vital aspect of the implementation of the Code. In this context, we commend Albania for the organisation of the Regional Seminar for participating States and Partners for Cooperation held on 27/28 May 2021.

We reconfirm that the knowledge, skills and experience of both women and men are essential to efforts aimed at furthering peace, security and stability in the OSCE region, including the implementation of the Code of Conduct, and we are committed to ensuring the full, equal and meaningful participation of women in uniform. In line with this, we thank the Swedish Chair of the OSCE for organizing the upcoming retreat on the OSCE Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security, which will be devoted to the participation of women in the Armed Forces, scheduled to be held in Stockholm during the Austrian FSC Chairmanship.

Mr. Chair, we thank you for the opportunity to exchange views on this important topic and we look forward to fruitful discussions during the two sessions today on the implementation of the Code of Conduct.

Thank you for your attention.

The Candidate Countries REPUBLIC of NORTH MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO*, SERBIA* 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, ANDORRA and SAN MARINO align themselves with this statement.

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