



EUROPEAN UNION

Statement by Federica Mogherini, High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the European Commission

23nd Meeting of the OSCE Ministerial Council Hamburg, 9 December 2016

Excellencies,
Dear Friends,

Security in Europe needs cooperation in Europe. This is why we are here, this is why the OSCE was founded. It is still true 41 years after the Helsinki Final Act.

When our predecessors met in the 1970s, the situation was different, but not less difficult than it is today. Yet they succeeded in reaching agreement on the need for cooperation in our continent and across the Atlantic, and on a shared set of principles to drive such cooperation. Since then, the European security order has been based on the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of States, the inviolability of borders, the peaceful settlement of disputes and the free choice of a State's future.

Today, these long-standing key principles of European security have not been respected. The crisis in and around Ukraine has yet to be resolved and the region continues to be burdened by protracted conflicts.

Failure comes when we let our differences prevail, instead of focusing on our shared interests and on the international frameworks we need to achieve them.

The European Union continues to see the OSCE as a crucial pillar of European security. It is a pillar built both on cooperation and on principles, because our common work needs to be underpinned by a shared understanding of the basic rules of our international system. We believe the OSCE can provide a tool and a framework towards peace and security in our continent.

Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea and the destabilising actions in eastern Ukraine are in flagrant violation of the OSCE principles and international law. The European Union will not recognise the annexation and will continue to call for it to be reversed. Likewise, we will continue to call for respect for the ceasefire in eastern Ukraine and full implementation from all sides of the Minsk agreements.

The European Union has given its full support to international efforts to bring about the full implementation of the Minsk agreements: these efforts include the "Normandy" format, the Trilateral Contact Group and the multi-faceted OSCE presence, in particular through the Special Monitoring Mission. The full implementation of the agreements can pave the way for a sustainable political solution to the conflict, in full respect for Ukraine's sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity. We stress the need for full, safe and unhindered access by the OSCE Monitoring Mission to the whole territory of Ukraine, including its border with Russia, as well as for the geographical expansion of the OSCE Observer Mission at the Russian checkpoints.

The European Union is ready to increase its support for the implementation of the Minsk agreements, including our commitment to the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights. We are also ready to sustain a possible OSCE mission to bolster the security of local elections and to contribute to reconstruction efforts.

Elsewhere, we will continue our work to resolve protracted conflicts, based on the existing mediation formats. Our aim is to reach sustainable political solutions in line with OSCE principles and norms of international law. In light of the dangerous escalation in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict last April, the European Union calls for re-engagement in good faith on the basis of proposals put forward by the

Minsk Group Co-Chairs. We still hope to see the implementation of the agreements reached at the Vienna and St. Petersburg Summits. On the Transnistrian settlement, the European Union contributed to recent positive dynamics, leading to the 5+2 meeting in Berlin: we stand ready to support the sides with technical solutions to concrete problems between them.

The OSCE's concept of security, with its three pillars, matches perfectly with the idea of “sustainable security” we embedded in our European Union Global Strategy for foreign and security policy. I would like to finish by saying that the OSCE has also a key role to play for us when it comes to migration, when it comes to addressing the crisis in the Middle East and in North Africa, and with a final word of appreciation and thanks for the German Chairmanship's work: thank you Frank-Walter Steinmeier, Foreign Minister of Germany, and I am sure we will continue this very good collaboration with the Austrian and Italian Chairmanships.

Thank you.