



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Forum for Security Co-operation N°1090 Vienna, 9 October 2024

EU Statement on Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security

1. The European Union and its Member States commend the Danish FSC Chair for selecting the topic of the OSCE Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security for today's Security Dialogue, notably the particular focus on the accountability of armed forces personnel during conflict. We also thank the participating panellists for their presentations.
2. As we approach 30 years since the adoption of the Code of Conduct, the importance of these commitments remain as relevant today as when they were adopted in 1994. Participating States agreed on this tool designed to preserve peace, prevent conflicts and strengthen international security and cooperation, and to establish democratic control of armed forces, in accordance with international law. In order to achieve these requirements, and thus ensure the effective implementation of the Code, participating States need to abide by their commitments in practice.
3. Understanding the significance of the Code, participating States introduced a comprehensive information exchange on its implementation and decided in 2011 to hold an annual discussion focusing on its implementation which successfully took place every year until 2021. Now, for the third year in a row, it has not been possible to have the focused Annual Discussion on the implementation of Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security due to Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine. We remind all participating States of their commitments made in this regard and look forward to a responsible and thorough evaluation of the application of the Code of Conduct in the OSCE. In particular, Russia's heinous actions in the context of its ongoing war of aggression against Ukraine and the support by Belarus, are in violation of most of the Code's tenets. The Code of Conduct also continues to be relevant in the context of the peaceful resolution of all unresolved conflicts in the OSCE region, including those in the Republic of Moldova and in Georgia with full respect for their territorial integrity, sovereignty

and independence within their internationally recognised borders, which remains a key priority for the EU. The EU also continues its support for advancing a sustainable and lasting peace between Armenia and Azerbaijan based on the principles of recognition of sovereignty, the inviolability of borders and territorial integrity.

4. The Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security, as a fundamental OSCE document addresses the issue of democratic control of the armed forces and emphasises the principles of International Humanitarian Law (IHL) in the use of force. It provides ethical and political standards on the rule of law, human rights and the principles of international law in the politico-military security dimension, which requires, inter alia, the participating States to adopt measures to ensure compliance with, and the consistency of their defence policies with IHL. It is in the interest of all OSCE participating States to respect the fundamental principles of IHL.
5. Taking into account the importance of IHL in the currently destabilised security landscape in the OSCE area, destabilised through Russia and its war of aggression, we would in particular highlight the duties and rights of armed forces personnel as outlined in section VII of the Code of Conduct in paragraphs 29 to 31 in which participating States commit to, among others, instruct its armed forces personnel in international conventions and commitments governing armed conflict and about individual accountability for their actions.
6. We have the right tool at our disposal. We need to ensure the Code is implemented properly and that all participating States fulfil their commitments.

Thank you.

Alignments:

The Candidate Countries NORTH MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO*, ALBANIA*, UKRAINE, the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA, BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA*, and GEORGIA, the EFTA countries ICELAND, LIECHTENSTEIN and NORWAY,

members of the European Economic Area, as well as ANDORRA and SAN MARINO align themselves with this statement.

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