



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE 72nd Joint FSC-PC Meeting

Vienna, 20 February 2019

**EU Statement in response to Mr. Bertie Ahern on
“Lessons Learned from Conflict Resolution”**

The European Union and its Member States warmly welcome Mr. Bertie Ahern, former Taoiseach (Prime Minister) of Ireland, to the joint meeting of the Forum for Security Co-operation and the Permanent Council and thank him for his address. We thank the Slovak OSCE Chairmanship and the Swiss FSC Chair for the opportunity to discuss positive achievements from the past in dealing with conflicts in Europe. We sincerely hope that this experience will serve us as an example for our endeavours in this Organisation.

Mr. Chairman, the European Union was created to replace historic enmity with binding and steadfast friendships. The Union of today has evolved and adapted to contemporary circumstances, but the Coal and Steel Community and then the EEC, were created with the hope that never again would Europe be destroyed by war. The EU is built on the strong foundations of shared values and common purpose rooted in freedom, democracy, human rights and the rule of law.

As Irish Prime Minister, Mr. Ahern played a central role in the negotiation of the Good Friday/Belfast Agreement in 1998, which secured peace in Northern Ireland after more than the three decades of ‘the Troubles’. The 1998 Agreement remains to this day as the basis for peace and progress in Northern Ireland.

The European Union has worked with the UK and Ireland over the last two decades to support the peace process in Northern Ireland, including for instance through the PEACE and INTERREG programmes. Supporting the 1998 Agreement in all its parts and the gains and benefits of the peace in Northern Ireland will remain of paramount importance for the Union.

We would also like to underline the important role of the OSCE in advancing peace and

security in Europe. The OSCE, as a regional arrangement under Chapter VIII of the UN Charter and a multilateral forum for dialogue and negotiation, has led over the years to a number of key commitments across all three dimensions, including fundamental politico-military agreements. Its founding document, the 1975 Helsinki Final Act, contains key elements of the European security order, including the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of States, the inviolability of borders and the peaceful settlement of disputes.

These principles must be respected by all OSCE participating States and, where they are violated or challenged, must be restored. Lack of observance of these principles has led to a loss of mutual trust and confidence.

Against the backdrop of the crisis in European security there is an urgent need to further strengthen the OSCE's ability to respond to crises based on its comprehensive concept of security, as well as to make better use of all the OSCE's capacities and mechanisms. We need to strengthen the OSCE's effectiveness across the conflict cycle and to achieve tangible progress in resolution of the crisis in and around Ukraine and protracted conflicts in Georgia and the Republic of Moldova, and of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

The OSCE concept of comprehensive security has proven its enduring relevance. There can be no lasting security and stability without respect for democracy, the rule of law, human rights and fundamental freedoms.

We reiterate that full implementation of MC Decision 3/11 on the Elements of the Conflict Cycle is a prerequisite for strengthening the role of the OSCE in early warning, conflict prevention, mediation, crisis management, conflict resolution and post-conflict rehabilitation across the three dimensions. In this regard, we stress the important role of the autonomous institutions and field missions. Full and meaningful participation of women in all aspects of peace and security decision-making and action is necessary to bring about longer-lasting and more sustainable, inclusive, peace. The EU also works closely with civil society actors, including youth in all conflict phases.

Mr. Chairman, we are facing a more connected, contested and complex world. None of our countries has the strength nor the resources to address these threats and seize the opportunities of our time alone. In the EU, we have developed the Global Strategy for European Foreign and Security Policy to guide the EU's global actions in the future. The Strategy attempts to bring together a broad set of instruments at our disposal to act

comprehensively and contribute to our shared objectives of conflict resolution, peace and stability on our continent. The EU pursues an integrated approach towards conflict prevention, making use of all available tools and aiming at strengthening long-term resilience.

Mr. Chairman, we concur with the view that we should exploit the value of the OSCE as a unique platform for mutual dialogue, based on the need to respect international law and fundamental principles of the OSCE. While overcoming the current crisis depends on the latter, we should seize every opportunity for genuine dialogue, based on good faith and political will, be it within established formats, such as the FSC or the PC, or in informal settings, including the IWG Structured Dialogue.

The EU and its Member States will continue to work tirelessly, including in the OSCE, to share and deepen the benefits of peace and security on this continent and beyond. We will be a common voice for adherence to international law and OSCE principles and commitments.

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