

ASRC session on Structured Dialogue: UK statement

Thank you Mister Moderator. We would like to thank the Swedish Chairpersonship for organising this Special Session on the Structured Dialogue. And though he has now left the OSCE, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Spanish Chair of the Informal Working Group, Ambassador Cuesta for his able stewardship of the Structured Dialogue and his excellent team for all their efforts in organising the Expert level Workshop and Informal Working Group meetings so far this year.

The UK continues to value the Structured Dialogue which we see as having two primary purposes. First, as an additional, informal forum for participating States to have meaningful conversations about the current and future challenges and risks to security in the OSCE area. Second, to explore opportunities for increasing reciprocal transparency and reducing risks in these times of heightened tension and increased threats to our security.

We have seen again this year that new strategic threats, including the suite of actions by state and non-state actors below the threshold of armed conflict, remains a priority current and future security challenge for a great many participating States. Unfortunately, we have again seen that one participating State refuses to acknowledge this or to engage on the serious concerns raised. It was also disappointing that the same participating State chose not to engage in discussions on climate change and security, an important subject where we believe the OSCE could have the potential to add value for the benefit of us all.

Under such circumstances, it will be difficult to fulfil the Hamburg mandate of fostering greater understanding to serve as a common solid basis for a way forward. And we risk losing the chance to improve our collective security by further developing the proposals made by a number of participating States in both the Climate Change and Security, and New Strategic Threats sessions, proposals which we believe merit serious consideration.

Turning now to the transparency, risk reduction and incident prevention component of the Structured Dialogue. We have said many times that we are open to the idea of collecting best practices on TRRIP, and exploring additional voluntary transparency where this is reciprocated and as a complement to existing mandatory measures. The Expert Level Workshop discussion on Preventing Incidents at Sea appeared to show good support for considering further work on best practices in the maritime domain too.

I want to finish by highlighting some very clear messages that we again heard from many participating States during Structured Dialogue meetings this year. First, restoring full respect for the fundamental OSCE principles enshrined in the Helsinki Final Act and Paris Charter, including respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States, and the non-use or threat of force is essential. Second, all participating States need to fully and

faithfully implement their existing politico-military commitments. Third, we urgently need to modernise the Vienna Document as the first and most obvious task in progressing the TRRIP agenda. Fourth, no agreement, however good on paper, can address deliberately provocative or aggressive activities. And fifth, participating States continue to be concerned about the risks to their security posed by below threshold activities, in addition to the more traditional security challenges that our existing instruments were designed to address.

Mr. Moderator, we look forward to the October meeting of the Structured Dialogue. You may be assured of the continued support of the UK Delegation, and our continued constructive engagement.