



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Forum for Security Co-operation N°1074 Vienna, 17 April 2024

EU Opening Statement

1. Dear Ambassador, congratulations on assuming the position as Chair of the OSCE's Forum for Security Co-operation and thank you for providing us with an overview of your Chairpersonship's agenda. We look forward to working with you and your team.
2. Mr Chair, as we meet here after the recess, tragically there has not been any pause in the terrible human suffering inflicted on Ukraine by Russia's decision to start its full-scale invasion of Ukraine just over two years ago. On the contrary, Russia has intensified its appalling attacks, including one of the largest aerial strikes on energy infrastructure. Furthermore, we condemn the targeting of rescue workers intervening after Russia's attacks. Sadly, again innocent lives have been lost all across Ukraine. We express our sympathy and solidarity to all those affected as a consequence of Russia's shocking and merciless actions, including Russia's treatment of prisoners of war.
3. Let us be clear, this tragedy is a direct result of Russia's war of aggression, of Russia's violation of international law, including humanitarian and human rights law as well as its violation of this Organisation's own commitments. Commitments to which Russia, as an OSCE participating State, contributed to developing and adhered to. We condemn Russia's unprovoked and outrageous war of aggression in the strongest possible terms including the support provided by Belarus, as well as Iran and the DPRK.
4. In the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe, we must acknowledge and address these facts again and again. It is therefore clear that Russia's continuing catastrophic war of aggression against Ukraine, the violations of international law and the suffering caused must remain on the top of this Forum's agenda. In the same vein, we acknowledge other forums that actively seek to address security implications of the aggression, and we welcome in this

context the Second Black Sea Security Conference of the International Crimea Platform in Sofia on 15 April 2024.

5. Excellency, you have planned four Security Dialogues during your Chairpersonship. Without doubt, these topics represent four areas in which this Forum should rightfully host and promote dialogue and exchange. Humanitarian demining is a recurring, yet critically important topic, though we must concede that despite all the effort, here and elsewhere, we still need further progress on this matter throughout the OSCE area. Your plan to address the scope, challenges and the way forward makes perfect sense in this regard. Military education and the changing roles of military academies is a new topic and so is the topic of Emerging technologies and military data collection – Open-source intelligence. Being novel does not mean unrelated to our mandate and these topics are clearly relevant to this Forum. Finally, the Women, Peace and Security agenda remains as important as ever. In a joint FSC/PC meeting we can have an even more comprehensive approach to women’s contribution to peace and security: lessons learned and challenges ahead.
6. We encourage all participating States to make sure that we effectively and judiciously discuss all these matters during the upcoming trimester. The FSC is a unique platform for mutual dialogue on security issues throughout the OSCE area and we should all strive to make full use of its potential, even in these confounding and dreadful times. Avoiding or impeding meaningful discussions undermines one of the main purposes of this Forum and deteriorates the FSC itself and does not benefit its participating States and citizens living in the OSCE area and beyond.
7. Excellency, the Chairpersonship of Croatia can rely on our full support in your challenging role as well as the other Troika members – Cyprus and Denmark. We have full confidence that you will succeed in this formidable task and wish you, Ambassador Horvatić, and your dedicated team every success in the months to come.

Thank you.

The Candidate Countries NORTH MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO*, ALBANIA*, UKRAINE, the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA, BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA*, and GEORGIA, and 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.