
Chairmanship: Ukraine**946th PLENARY MEETING OF THE FORUM**

1. Date: Wednesday, 13 May 2020 (via video teleconference)

Opened: 10 a.m.

Suspended: 12.50 p.m.

Resumed: 3 p.m.

Closed: 4.35 p.m.

2. Chairperson: Ambassador Y. Tsymbaliuk

Prior to taking up the agenda, the Chairperson reminded the FSC of the technical modalities for the conduct of meetings via teleconferencing technology during the COVID-19 pandemic (FSC.GAL/37/20 OSCE+).

3. Subjects discussed – Statements – Decisions/documents adopted:

Agenda item 1: SECURITY DIALOGUE ON SALW AND SCA/MINE ACTION

– *Presentation by Mr. A. Petrenko, Deputy Minister of Defence of Ukraine for European Integration*

– *Presentation by Ms. R. Voda, Deputy Minister of Interior of Albania and Head of the Albanian National Commission for Small Arms and Light Weapons*

Chairperson, Deputy Minister of Interior of Albania (FSC.DEL/99/20 OSCE+), Deputy Minister of Defence for European Integration of Ukraine (FSC.DEL/98/20), Representative of the OSCE Conflict Prevention Centre (Annex 1), Chairperson of the Informal Group of Friends on Small Arms and Light Weapons and Stockpiles of Conventional Ammunition (Latvia) (Annex 2), United States of America (FSC.DEL/92/20), Croatia-European Union (with the candidate countries Albania, Montenegro and North Macedonia; the country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate country Bosnia and Herzegovina; the European Free Trade Association countries Iceland and Liechtenstein, members of the European Economic Area; as well as Moldova and San Marino, in alignment) (Annex 3),

United Kingdom (FSC.DEL/91/20 OSCE+), Canada, Switzerland (Annex 4), Belarus (FSC.DEL/93/20 OSCE+), Armenia (FSC.DEL/95/20 OSCE+), Azerbaijan, Turkey, Russian Federation (Annex 5), FSC Co-ordinator for Projects on Small Arms and Light Weapons and Stockpiles of Conventional Ammunition (Hungary) (Annex 6), Ukraine

Agenda item 2: DECISION ON THE DATE OF THE 2020 MEETING OF
THE HEADS OF VERIFICATION CENTRES

Chairperson

Decision: The Forum for Security Co-operation adopted Decision No. 1/20 (FSC.DEC/1/20) on the date of the 2020 Meeting of the Heads of Verification Centres, the text of which is appended to this journal.

Agenda item 3: GENERAL STATEMENTS

Situation in and around Ukraine: Ukraine, United States of America, Croatia-European Union (with the candidate countries Albania, Montenegro and North Macedonia; the European Free Trade Association countries Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway, members of the European Economic Area; as well as Andorra, Georgia, Moldova, San Marino and Ukraine, in alignment) (FSC.DEL/97/20), Russian Federation, United Kingdom (FSC.DEL/94/20 OSCE+), Canada, Lithuania (FSC.DEL/100/20 OSCE+)

Agenda item 4: ANY OTHER BUSINESS

None

4. Next meeting:

Wednesday, 20 May 2020, at 10 a.m., via video teleconference



**Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
Forum for Security Co-operation**

FSC.JOUR/952

13 May 2020

Annex 1

Original: ENGLISH

946th Plenary Meeting

FSC Journal No. 952, Agenda item 1

**STATEMENT BY
THE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE CONFLICT PREVENTION
CENTRE**

Dear Mr. Chairperson,
Dear Excellencies,
Dear colleagues,

Thank you for giving the Conflict Prevention Centre (CPC) the floor on this important topic. Small arms and light weapons (SALW) and stockpiles of conventional ammunition (SCA) have typically been two of the most consensual topics in this Forum, as is shown by the high interest that every FSC Chairmanship has had in scheduling Security Dialogues on this topic in their work programmes, with panel speakers giving views from all possible different angles. The relevance of mine action for the OSCE has been often underscored, and the activities of various field operations, also in working together with non-governmental organizations like the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining or the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS), are testimony to that fact. Another angle is the outlook on the various assistance projects that have followed assistance requests from participating States. In this area too, we can boast an impressive track record, on the part of both field operations and the CPC, in working with various authorities to deal with safety and security aspects of SALW and SCA, most recently especially with Ukraine and South-East Europe, where Albania has been very forward-looking in its approach. I commend both speakers, Deputy Minister Rovena Voda and Deputy Minister Anatolii Petrenko, for shedding light on these aspects from their respective positions.

However, I would like to focus on yet another angle of attack, if you will. This concerns the normative aspects of our work within the Forum. I will briefly consider the work on the Best Practice Guides (BPGs), information exchanges, the online reporting tool and the assistance mechanism, and will conclude with a view on the way ahead for this year.

Firstly, a few words on the Best Practice Guides, without dwelling on this too long, as the Chairperson of the Informal Group of Friends on SALW and SCA, Ilona Ekmane, will also intervene on this topic.

The work on the review and update of the BPGs on SALW/SCA is being undertaken with the aim of increasing the OSCE's relevance and impact in our efforts to strengthen

SALW control and to enhance capabilities of participating States to combat illicit trafficking in a comprehensive and efficient way.

A significant advantage of the OSCE is that the ownership of the BPGs lies with participating States themselves, which guarantees a common understanding on ways and measures to combat illicit trafficking in SALW and SCA. The BPGs and its updates are endorsed by all 57 participating States.

The BPGs represent the participating States' lowest common denominator in small arms controls preventing arms being diverted into the illegal markets and wrong hands. Moreover, in this narrow but important field they also represent – especially in the OSCE context – a confidence- and security-building measure that reflects the comprehensiveness and indivisibility of security and our allegiance to shared commitments, principles and norms of behaviour as well as, first and foremost, their practical application on the ground. The more unified we are in our efforts, the safer and more secure the OSCE participating States will be.

For over a year, work on the BPGs has been going on constantly at the meetings of the Informal Group of Friends on SALW and SCA under the able leadership of its Chairperson. Following agreement on the general principles of the process ahead and the mechanism for updating the Best Practice Guides, some participating States have already taken the lead in reviewing and updating BPGs in accordance with the comprehensive step-by-step approach that has been established to provide a sustainable and transparent updating mechanism, which is being tested as we proceed. Once there is clear evidence that the mechanism is functioning well, we might consider developing a separate BPG on updating the BPGs for future review cycles, or even for the development of new BPGs in SALW/SCA life-cycle areas that aren't yet covered. The lessons learned from the implementation of the assistance projects – garnered by OSCE field operations and the CPC – will also be fed into the updates of the BPGs.

I would next like to move on to the subject of information exchanges on SALW and SCA.

Annual submissions and regular updates to the one-off information exchange is an essential confidence- and security-building measure in itself. When there is full compliance, the information exchanges support the review of progress in the implementation of the OSCE framework Documents on SALW and SCA, just as much as it forms the basis for assistance needed by participating States.

Over the past decades the OSCE has developed a plethora of related decisions with various deadlines and templates. Implementing them in a compliant manner is rather challenging and the CPC does its utmost to lessen the burden of the participating States.

Firstly, we endeavour to facilitate reporting by organizing workshops and training seminars on SALW information exchanges. Now, with the COVID-19 experience, we are considering the development of an e-learning module on SALW/SCA information exchanges for the participating States.

Secondly, we provide regular overviews of the information exchanged. With the development of iMARS, in the course of time the participating States will get the tools they need to actually analyse the information exchanged.

Thirdly, we at the CPC use the Announcing and Reminding Mechanism to announce the information exchanges, while the FSC Chairmanship reminds States of their reporting commitments. Since this is a State-owned process, complying with these commitments is crucial if we are to be able to keep each other accountable. In my statement last week I reminded participating States of the importance of submitting regular updates to the one-off SALW information exchange of 2001. Some States do it regularly or in conjunction with national reporting to the UN, but others seem to have forgotten this commitment.

A topic connected to the matter of reporting is the online reporting tool.

Some years ago, to facilitate the reporting, the CPC, jointly with UNODA, harmonized the reporting templates on issues that are the same for both the OSCE and the UN. Now, since the UN has changed the template based on the outcomes of RevCon3 (2018), the CPC stands ready to support the harmonization work in order to re-synchronize the simultaneous reporting on SALW, thus lessening the reporting burden of the participating States.

In 2017, the CPC introduced the online reporting tool to allow participating States submit their national reports online and simultaneously to both the OSCE and UNODA. At present, simultaneous submissions to the OSCE and the UN are technically not possible until we upload the harmonized templates.

I have to admit that the online reporting tool is not widely used by participating States, for several reasons. One reason is certainly that the tool applies only to updating the one-off information exchange. It is quite cumbersome for participating States to have to set up the accounts just to get access to the tool for this single purpose. It might therefore be useful, as proposed by a number of participating States and encouraged at Ministerial Council level, to expand the tool with annual submissions on SALW imports/exports seized/destroyed, Conventional Arms Transfers reports, and compliance with the Ottawa Convention on anti-personnel landmines.

Another reason for the rather minimal use of the tool could be the different deadlines for the submissions to the UN and the OSCE (on the OSCE side there is in fact no deadline for the one-off exchange).

On the deadlines, it is important to note that the UN requests States to submit the national reports by 31 March every second year as part of the preparations for the UN Biennial Meeting of States on implementation of the Programme of Action on SALW. At the OSCE, we had the first information exchange in 2001 as a one-off measure and agreed to provide regular updates when necessary. The participating States might want to consider setting a deadline for a regular review of one-off information, which would be helpful in synchronizing it with the UN and facilitating reporting compliance. Another alternative would be for the CPC to annually send out the letter to all participating States reminding them of their all-too-often-forgotten commitment to submit updates to the one-off exchange, as we did last week. The CPC letter elicited a number of clarifying reactions from the

participating States, which is positive and will, we hope, increase the number of submissions this year. The CPC stands ready to provide regular information to the participating States on this challenging information exchange.

In the meanwhile, the idea of iMARS has materialized and is intended to cover all information exchanges. However, as you are frequently informed, it will take a while until the participating States can utilize this important database. That said, it might still be worthwhile to expand the online reporting tool with more information exchanges and see it as a preparation for the iMARS.

I would now like to switch to the topic of the assistance mechanism.

The assistance mechanism on SALW and SCA is another important junction between the OSCE's normative framework and its practical experience in the field. It is this combined mechanism that fuels the OSCE's practical assistance projects as they support States in building their capacities in a variety of areas: conventional ammunition accountability, explosive material and detonating devices control, toxic rocket fuel components removal; security and safety infrastructure upgrades, advancing stockpile management; disposal of landmines and explosive remnants of war; and combating the illicit trafficking of weapons, ammunition and explosives.

Through the work and meetings of the Chairperson of the Informal Group of Friends on SALW and SCA and the Co-ordinator for SALW and SCA practical assistance projects, we are gathering lessons identified and processing the feedback from the field that can serve as food for thought to all of us on how to further advance the assistance mechanism.

That discussion will examine the potential for improving our efficiency and timeliness and will enhance the OSCE's capacity to engage more effectively in different environments and processes. For that reason, we will continue to gather and present to you the lessons identified from the assistance projects and encourage you to appropriately reflect them in all of our future normative deliberations.

I would like to conclude with a short outlook on this year. The Seventh Biennial Meeting of States is going to be postponed on account of the COVID-19 pandemic. A decision under silence is expected this Thursday. Nevertheless, it is of paramount importance that the OSCE's second Biennial Meeting to Assess the Implementation of the OSCE Documents on SALW and SCA takes place and takes stock of the progress achieved with regard to the normative side, including the updated BPGs and assistance mechanism, and information exchanges. We expect the FSC Chairmanship to be able to present the draft decision on the meeting in one of the upcoming Working Groups. The outcomes of the OSCE Biennial Meeting will guide us towards the Tirana Ministerial and help us make informed decisions.

On the deliverables in Tirana we as the CPC can only speculate. It is the participating States who decide on the levels of manoeuvrability. With our institutional memory and our experience in looking at the continuous work the participating States are doing, we could expect the topics I have considered to be raised, that is to say, the promotion of the use of the updated BPGs in the participating States, field operations and assistance projects; information

exchange and compliance; e-learning and online tools; and raised awareness of the potential improvement of the assistance mechanism process.

With these words of reflection, Mr. Chairperson, I conclude my address to the Forum on this topic. May I ask you to add this statement to the journal of the day.

Thank you for your attention.



**Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
Forum for Security Co-operation**

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13 May 2020
Annex 2

Original: ENGLISH

946th Plenary Meeting
FSC Journal No. 952, Agenda item 1

**STATEMENT BY
THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE INFORMAL GROUP OF FRIENDS ON
SMALL ARMS AND LIGHT WEAPONS AND STOCKPILES OF
CONVENTIONAL AMMUNITION (LATVIA)**

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

Dear colleagues,
Distinguished speakers,

Today's Security Dialogue has once again drawn our attention to mine action and several challenges that may be encountered during mine action efforts. In my capacity as Chairperson of the Informal Group of Friends on Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) and Stockpiles of Conventional Ammunition (SCA), I should like to thank the speakers for their valuable contributions on this important topic.

Mine action in the OSCE area has been discussed on numerous occasions within the Forum for Security Co-operation (FSC). For example, in January 2020 the Turkish FSC Chairmanship increased our awareness of mine action, notably of its international regulation and of how mine action is applied in practice. In 2019 the Swiss and Tajik FSC Chairmanships devoted Security Dialogues to, respectively, humanitarian demining and regional co-operation in mine action, while in 2018 the Slovenian FSC Chairmanship focused on the role of mine action in the conflict cycle.

The OSCE is closely involved in mine action efforts at the global level. In particular, mine action is used by the OSCE as a confidence- and security-building measure in conflict prevention and resolution, crisis management, and post-conflict rehabilitation. This important aspect serves to define our role and responsibilities, and guides our work within the FSC.

Mr. Chairperson,

I would also like to thank the Conflict Prevention Centre (CPC) for bringing the SALW/SCA normative issues to our attention. In preparation for the Biennial Meeting to Assess the Implementation of the OSCE Documents on SALW and SCA later this year, I would like to emphasize the importance of the ongoing process of the review and update of the SALW/SCA Best Practice Guides (BPGs). At last week's FSC meeting I gave a briefing

on the progress achieved so far. At present, three of the draft updates of OSCE BPGs are being reviewed by the core group experts and OSCE field operations, and one OSCE BPG draft update is on the FSC Working Group A agenda. Yesterday, I received the draft update of another OSCE BPG, namely, the Best Practice Guide on National Procedures for Stockpile Management and Security, with proposed updates from the UK delegation, which has taken the lead on this BPG. In accordance with the BPG review and updating mechanism established in the Informal Group of Friends, I will share this draft with the interested participating States and OSCE field operations as indicated in the matrix. I commend the countries that are actively involved, and invite others to join in these efforts.

The BPG updating principles and the mechanism that we have developed in the Informal Group of Friends are being tested as we proceed with the review and update process. I have also noted that the preferred BPG review cycle would be a five-year period. When we gain more experience and feel comfortable with the review and update process, we might consider developing a separate document for guidance on reviewing and updating the BPGs for future cycles.

On information exchanges elaborated by the CPC, I cannot but agree that SALW information exchange is caught in a web of multiple commitments and constitutes a major reporting challenge. I welcome the CPC's intention to develop an e-learning training tool for the delegates in Vienna and colleagues in the capitals, as well as working on the development of iMARS. In the meantime, we could take the opportunity to expand the online reporting platform by adding, for example, information exchanges on conventional arms transfer, SALW imports and exports, and replies to the Questionnaire on Anti-Personnel Mines and Explosive Remnants of War. Also, we should recall that Ministerial Council Decision No. 10/17 on SALW and SCA welcomed the development of a voluntary online tool for the submission of OSCE SALW-related information exchanges.

The CPC informed us last week, and again today, about changes made by the UN to the national reporting template, and the implications for us at the OSCE. I suggest that we devote the next Informal Group of Friends meeting to the SALW information exchanges. At the meeting we would kindly ask the CPC to go into greater detail on the re-harmonization of OSCE and UN templates, and we can also discuss utilization of the online reporting tool and the submission deadlines.

Mr. Chairperson,

Turning to possible deliverables for the Tirana Ministerial Council, a key guideline will be the OSCE Biennial Meeting on SALW and SCA. It will serve as an opportunity to take stock, and a platform for further discussions on assessing the implementation of the OSCE Documents on SALW and SCA, best practices, the assistance mechanism, and information exchanges.

Thank you for your attention.

I kindly ask that this statement be attached to the journal of the day.



**Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
Forum for Security Co-operation**

FSC.JOUR/952/Rev.1
13 May 2020
Annex 3

ENGLISH
Original: FRENCH

946th Plenary Meeting
FSC Journal No. 952, Agenda item 1

**STATEMENT BY
THE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE EUROPEAN UNION**

The delegation of Croatia, in its capacity as EU Presidency, passed the floor to the representative of the European Union, who delivered the following statement:

Mr. Chairperson,

The European Union and its Member States thank the speakers for joining this meeting of the Forum for Security Co-operation (FSC) and for their presentations, which have enabled us to enhance our knowledge of the practical work being done in this field.

The uncontrolled spread of small arms and light weapons (SALW) and of their ammunition is a major security and development issue, as is made clear by target 16.4 of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, which calls for arms flows to be significantly reduced by 2030. In adopting a new strategy against illicit firearms, SALW and their ammunition on 19 November 2018, the EU has acknowledged the importance of this issue.

The EU and its Member States fully support the UN Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, the next biennial meeting on which is meant to take place in June 2020 and will focus on combating diversion. The EU similarly supports the full implementation of the Arms Trade Treaty, to which all its Member States are party. Moreover, we welcome the work being carried out within the UN framework by the Group of Governmental Experts on problems arising from the accumulation of conventional ammunition stockpiles in surplus, which was established pursuant to General Assembly resolution 72/55.

The EU also supports various OSCE activities aimed at improving the control of SALW and their ammunition in Ukraine, the Republic of North Macedonia, Georgia and Moldova, for example. Lastly, since the start of 2020 the EU has been playing a greater role in steering and following up on the implementation of the regional Roadmap aimed at strengthening the co-ordination of efforts to combat illicit firearms trafficking in the Western Balkans by 2024. We welcome the contribution that the OSCE, following the example of several other international organizations and donors, is making to the implementation of this Roadmap.

At the same time, we congratulate the FSC Chairmanship for having chosen to focus today's Security Dialogue on mine action, which is a topic that enjoys less visibility within the Forum but is nonetheless very important.

We note, in particular, the importance of this topic for Ukraine. Indeed, within this same venue in early December last year we cited the thematic report of the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine (SMM) on the impact of mines and unexploded ordnance on the civilian population in the conflict area. That report, whose quality we greatly appreciate, clearly demonstrated the harmful effects of the many mines, unexploded ordnance and improvised explosive devices on civilians. They were the cause of one-third of the confirmed civilian casualties during the reporting period, that is, from January 2018 onwards. We lament the fact that these explosive objects have been responsible for numerous victims among children, killed or injured in tragic circumstances. The EU is supporting demining operations and victim assistance in eastern Ukraine through various projects. We reiterate our gratitude to the SMM for the essential work it is performing in monitoring the situation and raising the awareness of the local population in the risk zone.

The EU fervently advocates the universal prohibition of anti-personnel mines. All of its Member States have acceded to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, and we urge those States that have not yet done so to join the Convention without delay or to apply its provisions on an interim basis. We call on all stakeholders to refrain from the production, stockpiling, trade in and transfer of anti-personnel mines, and firmly condemn their use anywhere, at any time and by any actors, whether States or non-State actors.

Mr. Chairperson,

The EU and its Member States reaffirm their strong commitment to supporting efforts aimed at countering the threats posed by anti-personnel mines, improvised explosive devices and explosive remnants of war. The EU and its Member States are the principal donors of assistance for mine action. In the course of the past five years, more than 500 million euros have been disbursed in support of mine action in over 30 countries, with assistance being provided in such diverse areas as demining, risk education, victim assistance, stockpile destruction, capacity-building, and research and development on mine detection and demining. The EU is currently supporting mine action in Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo¹, Turkey and Ukraine. In Ukraine, the EU and its Member States are also supporting the HALO Trust and the Danish Demining Group in providing assistance to the communities affected by the conflict in eastern Ukraine through humanitarian demining and livelihood support. Additionally, we are helping mine-affected countries to set up or update national strategies for mine clearance and victim assistance, in close co-operation with the UN and other donors and stakeholders. We would remind you that mine clearance is very difficult and demanding work, which could not be accomplished without the commitment and courage of mine-clearing experts from all across the world. We will always support this work.

1 This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UN Security Council resolution 1244 (1999) and the International Court of Justice's advisory opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

We appreciate the OSCE's role in supporting mine action at various levels – for example, by strengthening the norms and principles of the participating States and by identifying, developing and implementing practical measures through assistance projects (as is currently the case, for example, in Tajikistan and Ukraine).

We subscribe to the view that mine action is closely linked to the concepts of early warning, conflict prevention, crisis management and post-conflict rehabilitation. Accordingly, the OSCE, through its mine action activities, can play an important part in terms of confidence- and security-building measures during the different phases of the conflict cycle where these involve the presence of landmines and unexploded or abandoned explosive ordnance, including improvised explosive devices.

We encourage participating States to step up their application of the shared norms and principles in this field, particularly through the use of Best Practice Guides and also through practical measures to support the States most affected.

Mr. Chairperson,

We thank you for having provided us with an opportunity to discuss this important topic.

Thank you for your attention. I would kindly ask you to attach this statement to the journal of today's meeting.

The candidate countries North Macedonia², Montenegro² and Albania², the country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate Bosnia and Herzegovina, the European Free Trade Association countries and members of the European Economic Area Iceland and Liechtenstein, as well as the Republic of Moldova and San Marino, align themselves with this statement.

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



946th Plenary Meeting

FSC Journal No. 952, Agenda item 1

STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF SWITZERLAND

Mr. Chairperson,

Thank you for raising the topics of small arms and light weapons (SALW), stockpiles of conventional ammunition (SCA) and mine action in the context of the security dialogues of the Ukrainian FSC Chairmanship. We would also like to extend our gratitude to Mr. Anatolii Petrenko, Deputy Minister of Defence for European Integration of Ukraine, and Ms. Rovena Voda, Deputy Minister of Interior of Albania and Head of the Albanian National Commission for Small Arms and Light Weapons, for their insightful presentations, and to Mr. Robin Mossinkoff, FSC Senior Support Officer in the FSC Support Section of the Conflict Prevention Centre (CPC), for his comprehensive summary of OSCE activities in this field and “words of reflection”. Furthermore, we would like to thank Ms. Ilona Ekmane, Chairperson of the Informal Group of Friends on SALW and SCA, for her untiring efforts in co-ordinating the update process of the SALW and SCA Best Practice Guides and for informing us on progress.

Switzerland would like to highlight the following two points:

Concerning small arms, light weapons and stockpiles of conventional ammunition, Switzerland acknowledges the work being done by the CPC in the framework of the project “Strengthening OSCE action against the illicit proliferation of small arms and light weapons (SALW) and stockpiles of conventional ammunition (SCA)”, namely, the drafting of guidance notes on the OSCE Assistance Mechanism for SALW and SCA. These notes provide a good overview of the different steps of the process and can help both the participating States and the CPC to provide information calculated to promote better co-operation in the management of SALW/SCA stockpile projects. Furthermore, Switzerland holds the view that the OSCE’s regional experience in the field of SCA can provide a valuable source of inspiration for global processes. Linking the regional with the global level is of particular relevance now that the “Group of Governmental Experts on problems arising from the accumulation of conventional ammunition stockpiles in surplus” convened by the UN Secretary-General has taken up its work. The Group comprises a number of experts from OSCE participating States, including Switzerland.

Furthermore, we would like to point out that the COVID-19 pandemic is having an impact on many humanitarian and development sectors, including mine action. Plans and schedules are having to be revised and a number of activities have been postponed.

Consequences are felt differently in different contexts. Despite this, mine action and the role it plays in protecting the civilian population and in enabling development remain undiminished. For this reason we believe we should continue supporting this sector, and also to enable it to withstand the consequences of the current crisis.

Mr. Chairperson, in closing, we want to assure you that Switzerland will continue to support ongoing efforts to update the OSCE Best Practice Guides in close co-operation and co-ordination with the Informal Group of Friends. Additionally, Switzerland will continue to make expertise and financial support available for ongoing and future OSCE assistance projects on SALW and SCA.

Thank you for your attention.



**Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
Forum for Security Co-operation**

FSC.JOUR/952

13 May 2020

Annex 5

ENGLISH

Original: RUSSIAN

946th Plenary Meeting

FSC Journal No. 952, Agenda item 1

**STATEMENT BY
THE DELEGATION OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION**

Mr. Chairperson,

We are grateful to the Ukrainian Chairmanship for having chosen the topics of small arms and light weapons (SALW), stockpiles of conventional ammunition (SCA) and mine action for consideration within the Security Dialogue framework. We welcome the keynote speakers and thank them for their presentations.

The addressing of a wide range of issues related to the provision of assistance to OSCE participating States in the field of SALW and SCA contributes specifically and practically to the strengthening of security in the Organization's area of responsibility. We note that the process to update the Best Practice Guides on SALW and SCA has been initiated and trust that there will be effective co-operation to that effect. The significance and relevance of this work has increased considerably, given the modalities currently in place for the Forum for Security Co-operation (FSC) – among other things, because it can help to shape a positive agenda.

We support the main thrust of the discussion on how efforts to counter the uncontrolled spread of SALW/SCA, reduce the dangers posed by mines and tackle the humanitarian aspects of these issues are of cardinal importance and should be sustainably continued. In that respect, it is important to take into account the specific circumstances and actual capacities of the OSCE, which has traditionally seen it as its task to support the implementation of United Nations global commitments and to provide assistance to its participating States.

We should particularly like to draw our distinguished colleagues' attention to the fact that, when discussing these topics today, it is essential to move away from a confrontational tone and the promotion of non-consensus-based approaches and to return to constructive, mutually respectful dialogue.

Mr. Chairperson,

In the same way as the earlier speakers, we should like to provide a brief overview of Russia's participation in mine action.

This is an area in which highly intensive work is being performed. Suffice it to mention that, for many years now, mine clearance operations have been ongoing in territories where fighting took place during the Second World War. Every year, units from Russia's Ministry of Emergency Situations eliminate around 40,000 explosive hazards left over from the battles of the years 1941–1945.

Guided by domestic legislation and by the Inhumane Weapons Convention and its additional "Mines Protocol" (Protocol II), Russia is implementing successful approaches for countering the mine threat. With regard to the Ottawa Convention on Anti-Personnel Mines, we wish to point out that, whilst our country shares its goals and targets, it is not a party to the Convention for a number of objective reasons.

Our State is assisting interested countries with the conduct of humanitarian demining operations – among other things, by deploying teams of military engineers and explosives experts, together with the necessary equipment. I shall now give a few examples.

At various points in time, assistance projects on humanitarian demining (involving Russia's Ministry of Emergency Situations) have been implemented in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, the territory of Kosovo, Nicaragua, Lebanon and Sri Lanka.

Our active co-operation with Serbia continues. Since 2008, a total of 16 major projects have been implemented, around 7 million square metres have been cleared of mines, and over 13,000 unexploded ordnance items (including aerial bombs, shells and cluster munitions) have been detected and destroyed. The programme aimed at assisting the Serbian Government with humanitarian demining is being conducted using international development assistance mechanisms through the International Civil Defence Organization.

Russia pays due attention to the training of specialists (including foreign ones) in the identification and defusing of mines. That is the purpose of the International Mine Action Centre, which was established within the Russian armed forces in 2014. Since its inception, the Centre has trained over 1,300 military experts from Armenia, Belarus, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Serbia, Syria and Laos.

Russia's assistance to Syria is an example of a separate strand of demining activities being performed beyond the OSCE area. During 2016–2017, Russian specialists conducted mine clearance and explosive hazard removal operations at the historical and architectural site of Palmyra and in the cities of Aleppo and Deir ez-Zor. In total, over 100,000 explosive remnants of war were destroyed. With a view to sharing best practices in this field, a branch of the International Mine Action Centre was set up in the city of Homs in 2017: the instruction of military personnel there is conducted in the Arabic language.

In March this year, specialists from the International Mine Action Centre accomplished a humanitarian demining mission around the city of Phonsavan, Laos, as a result of which over 10 hectares of territory were cleared and more than 830 explosive hazards were defused (including anti-personnel mines, artillery shells and US aerial cluster bombs). A specific feature of mine clearance work in that geographical area was the high concentration of unexploded ordnance and its components. Our specialists had to react to

each signal from the detectors and dig out and identify the objects in question in order to determine the degree of hazard they posed.

We provide more detailed information on our country's mine action efforts in our annual responses to the OSCE Questionnaire on Anti-Personnel Mines and Explosive Remnants of War.

Mr. Chairperson,

A lot has been said today about the situation with regard to tackling the mine threat in south-eastern Ukraine. As reported by the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, that is one of the areas most contaminated by landmines in the world. Since the beginning of the armed confrontation, over 1,000 people have been killed in Donbas as a result of exploding mines. Additionally, around 2 million people are potentially at risk from mine-related hazards. Children are those who suffer the most.

We stress the importance of the efforts by the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine (SMM) to raise the awareness of the local population in Donbas of the risk posed by mines. In that respect, the Mission's recent thematic report is revealing: it indicates that mines and explosive objects are responsible for a higher number of casualties than shelling and small-arms fire.

In the context of the Ukrainian Government's ongoing military operation against the civilian population of Donbas, it is legitimate to be concerned about the fact that, on the pretext of a threat from mines, large areas controlled by the Ukrainian armed forces remain closed to proper monitoring by the SMM. As a result, the Ukrainian Government's military activities cannot be fully assessed. The Mission's daily reports testify to the presence of "newly installed mines", which are being laid by the Ukrainian security forces in large numbers, sometimes even in their hundreds.

Thus, since the start of this year, the SMM monitors have in total spotted more than 1,000 mines laid by the Ukrainian security forces in areas of Donbas that are controlled by the Ukrainian Government: over 600 near the settlement of Rozsadky (SMM reports dated 11 March, 26 March and 2 April); about 200 near Troitske (report dated 2 April); and a similar number in the vicinity of Pyshevyk (report dated 22 January). As reported by the Mission, large minefields of the Ukrainian armed forces are located right next to the settlements of Vodiane, Marinka and Popasna. Last year in May, the SMM monitors spotted for the first time about 3,000 anti-tank mines near Pyshevyk (report dated 14 May 2019). One could go on and on. We should like to point out that while levelling groundless and irrelevant charges at others, the delegation of Ukraine should not forget that the actions of the Ukrainian armed forces are undermining international organizations' demining efforts in Donbas and creating a threat to the lives of civilians.

We count on progress being made on the execution of the instructions from the summit of the Normandy Four leaders held on 9 December 2019 with regard to building on the Trilateral Contact Group (TCG) decision from 2016 on mine clearance, and also with regard to the Ukrainian Government and the authorities in Donetsk and Luhansk agreeing on three additional disengagement areas – something that would help in clearing the Donbas territory of explosive hazards. Unfortunately, so far it has not proved possible to make

headway on these issues. We are helping in every way we can to bring about convergence between the parties within the TCG framework in Minsk, and we hope that they will manage to arrive at mutually acceptable arrangements.

We value the work on mine risk awareness and outreach efforts among the community being performed by the office of the OSCE Project Co-ordinator in Ukraine. Our assumption is that the activities of the Project Co-ordinator's office, including extrabudgetary ones, will remain transparent and accountable to the OSCE participating States, and that they will be in compliance with the mandate and take into account the agreements reached at the TCG.

Mr. Chairperson,

At FSC meetings, the delegation of Ukraine has repeatedly given assurances that anti-personnel mines are not being used in the areas controlled by the Ukrainian Government, and that Ukraine is fulfilling in a transparent manner and in good faith its obligations under the Ottawa Convention, to which it is a party. However, these assurances do not square with reality.

We would remind you that on 24 April, at a checkpoint of the Ukrainian armed forces in Popasna, the SMM spotted four boxes with "MON-90" written on them, one of which contained an anti-personnel mine. This finding was documented in an SMM report. The Ukrainian delegation regularly asserts at the OSCE that anti-personnel mines are neither manufactured nor used in its country. This raises the question: how, in that case, did anti-personnel mines end up in the hands of the Ukrainian military in the zone of armed confrontation?

Here is another example. In April 2017, the Ukrainian Security Service pointed out that POM-2 anti-personnel mines like those spotted in the Luhansk region were not in service with the Ukrainian armed forces. However, according to Ukraine's report for 2018 under the Ottawa Convention, the country then had a stockpile of 149,000 mines of that type. Significantly, in its report for 2019 Ukraine indicated that it had no mines whatsoever belonging to that category. The question remains open as to how Ukraine managed to destroy such a large number of mines in so short a period of time.

Contrary to the assertions by the Ukrainian Government, it is highly doubtful that those mines were all destroyed. Thus, in late April, the Ukrainian law enforcement authorities discovered a cache of weapons and military equipment – the largest such cache since the beginning of the crisis – that until recently had been under the control of the Ukrainian Volunteer Army (officially banned in Russia), which is closely linked to the Right Sector, a radical nationalist group that is also banned in Russia.

In the course of the investigation, which is being conducted at the behest of the Prosecutor General of Ukraine, explosives and around 100 tonnes of ammunition were found in that cache. Accordingly, criminal proceedings have been instituted.

Anti-personnel mines of different models within the MON family were discovered in the aforementioned cache, even though according to Ukraine's reporting, as already mentioned, no MON mines appear on the Ukrainian Government's "balance sheet". The

situation is exacerbated by the fact that, since they were not under official control, it was possible for large quantities of weapons, ammunition and mines to spread freely both within the crisis zone and beyond.

It is worth recalling, too, that Ukraine continues to import ammunition, explosives and mines from European Union countries, which is clearly not conducive to de-escalation of the politico-military situation in the south-east of the country.

Mr. Chairperson,

By way of conclusion, we should like to point out that, in our view, only that part of the meeting where the OSCE's work on SALW and mine action was reviewed may be said to have been useful.

At the same time, we note with regret that the address by the high-ranking Ukrainian representative and the statements by a number of delegations have left a dismal impression. They were full of confrontational rhetoric and accusations without proof, with the keynote being a striving to shift the blame on to others. We urge our FSC partners to return to constructive and professional discussions.

We express our concern at how the discussion of the politico-military aspects of pan-European security is going to unfold and our doubts as to Ukraine's ability to exercise the function of the FSC Chairmanship in a neutral and impartial manner.

I request that this statement be attached to the journal of the day.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.



**Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
Forum for Security Co-operation**

FSC.JOUR/952

13 May 2020

Annex 6

Original: ENGLISH

946th Plenary Meeting

FSC Journal No. 952, Agenda item 1

**STATEMENT BY
THE FSC CO-ORDINATOR FOR PROJECTS ON SMALL ARMS AND
LIGHT WEAPONS AND STOCKPILES OF CONVENTIONAL
AMMUNITION (HUNGARY)**

Esteemed Mr. Chairperson,
Your Excellences,
Dear colleagues,

In my capacity as FSC Co-ordinator for Projects on Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) and Stockpiles of Conventional Ammunition (SCA), I would like to express my gratitude to today's speakers, Mr Anatolii Petrenko, Deputy Minister of Defence for European Integration of Ukraine, and Ms. Rovena Voda, Deputy Minister of Interior of Albania and Head of the Albanian National Commission for SALW, for shedding light on various risks, challenges and response measures related to SALW/SCA with particular reference to mine action.

Even though mine action is not deeply anchored in the OSCE SALW/SCA normative framework, the OSCE has never shied away from responding to the requests of participating States in this domain. Several practical assistance projects have been implemented or are still being implemented, not only in Ukraine but also in Tajikistan, where in addition to national engagement a regional co-operation approach – through joint explosive ordnance disposal training, knowledge transfers and exchange programmes – has been pursued.

We should also recognize the fact that in the OSCE region, risks and challenges related to mine action are present not only in Ukraine or in Tajikistan but also in several other OSCE participating States, in South-Eastern Europe, for example, or in the South Caucasus. Mine action is fundamentally humanitarian in nature. Strengthening national capacities to enable participating States to deal with such specific problems on their own in the long run should be at the forefront of the OSCE's initiatives in this general area.

In relation to SALW control efforts in Albania, I would like to applaud the national authorities for such a comprehensive and co-ordinated approach to addressing security and safety risks posed by the illegal ownership, misuse and illicit trafficking of SALW.

I would like to recall that Albania presented an assistance request to the Forum for Security Co-operation on 9 October 2019. The request made on behalf of the Ministry of Interior and the State Police of Albania sought co-operation on:

- Supporting the establishment of the deactivation legislation framework and its due practical implementation;
- Building the capacities of the Police Department to strengthen their canine capabilities in detecting weapons and explosives; and
- Supporting the planning, designing and implementing of awareness-raising campaigns on the dangers of SALW and on improved SALW control.

It is my sincere and honest wish that the Albanian assistance request will be fulfilled in the form of an OSCE practical assistance project by the end of this year.

I would like to conclude with a word of gratitude to donors contributing to the OSCE practical assistance projects, not only in mine action but also in all other fields of our work.

Thank you for your attention and I would kindly ask that this statement be attached to the journal of the day.

Thank you and stay safe.



946th Plenary Meeting
FSC Journal No. 952, Agenda item 2

**DECISION No. 1/20
DATE OF THE 2020 MEETING OF THE HEADS OF
VERIFICATION CENTRES**

The Forum for Security Co-operation (FSC),

Reaffirming that the OSCE Vienna Document 2011 (VD 2011) remains a key instrument for confidence- and security-building measures (CSBMs), and noting that the Annual Implementation Assessment Meeting (AIAM) provides an important forum for discussing the implementation of agreed measures under the provisions of the VD 2011,

Taking note of the discussions conducted and views expressed during the 30th AIAM,

Recognizing that the aim of the Meeting of the Heads of Verification Centres is to exchange experiences and information on technical aspects of the implementation of agreed confidence- and security-building measures,

Decides:

1. To call for the 2020 Meeting of the Heads of Verification Centres to be held in Vienna, starting with an afternoon session on 16 December 2020 and continuing on 17 December 2020;
2. To task the Conflict Prevention Centre (CPC) with preparing and chairing the meeting;
3. To task the CPC with reporting on the 2020 Meeting of the Heads of Verification Centres at the opening session of the 31st AIAM.