

Joint Statement on Small Arms Light Weapons and Stockpiles of Conventional Ammunition
OSCE Ministerial Council in Stockholm, 2/3 December 2021

Closing Session

I have the honour to make this statement on behalf of the following 50 participating States: Albania, Andorra, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Moldova, Monaco, Netherlands, North Macedonia, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, San Marino, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom, United States and my own country, Montenegro.

We recognize that illicit trafficking in and destabilizing accumulation of Small Arms and Light Weapons and Stockpiles of Conventional Ammunition can pose a serious threat to our societies and acknowledge the work of the OSCE as the largest regional organisation together with the participating States to mitigate these threats.

We recognize the importance of OSCE norms and best practices aimed at combating illicit trafficking in all its aspects with regard to small arms and light weapons (SALW) and stockpiles of conventional ammunition (SCA), and note the threat posed by the diversion of SALW and SCA to illicit markets, *inter alia*, into the hands of terrorist and other criminal groups, and are mindful of the security and safety risks in this regard.

We are concerned by the negative impact of illicit trafficking in SALW and SCA on our societies, in particular the impact on women and children and note the importance of tackling the aforementioned challenges effectively and continue to enhance the OSCE's SALW- and SCA-related norms and best practices and their implementation.

We acknowledge the focus of the United Nations on addressing SALW-related issues in all its aspects and the importance of regional organizations in such efforts. In this respect we welcome the outcomes of the Seventh Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, held in New York in July 2021 as well as the report of the Group of Governmental Experts on problems arising from the accumulation of conventional ammunition stockpiles in surplus, issued in September 2021, and the relevant United Nations General Assembly resolutions.

We welcome the outcomes of the second Biennial Meeting to Assess the Implementation of the OSCE Documents on SALW and SCA, held on 13 and 14 October 2020, and of the OSCE Meeting to Review the Implementation of OSCE Assistance Projects in the Field of SALW and SCA, held on 5 and 6 October 2021, and related activities undertaken by the Forum for Security Co-operation (FSC), including the FSC's ongoing efforts to improve the implementation of the commitments and to review and update the OSCE Best Practice Guides on SALW and SCA. We welcome efforts undertaken with regard to combating illicit trafficking in SALW and SCA and the launch, in 2021, of a thematic review of the assistance mechanism under the OSCE Documents on SALW and SCA with the overall aim of improving the mechanism's implementation and adapting it to current needs.

We reiterate our commitment to:

- Continue our efforts to further promote full and effective implementation of the commitments set out in the OSCE Document on SALW, the OSCE Document on SCA, and related MC and FSC decisions;
- Facilitate ongoing efforts aimed at supporting participating States' efforts to combat illicit trafficking in SALW and SCA by promoting effective management of all aspects of the SALW life cycle by government security forces in all phases of the conflict cycle, and develop and implement effective and tailored OSCE assistance projects in this field;
- Continue to promote the exchange of views and information and the sharing of best practices among the participating States on a voluntary basis and if relevant to the FSC's mandate, in order to address the impact of the excessive and destabilizing accumulation and uncontrolled spread of SALW and associated ammunition on women and children and create equal opportunities for women's participation in policymaking, planning and implementation processes aimed at combating illicit trafficking in SALW, and likewise for their meaningful participation in OSCE assistance projects in the field of SALW and SCA;
- Further promote the voluntary application of the OSCE Best Practice Guides on SALW and SCA during the implementation of OSCE assistance projects and in national capacity-building;
- Explore ways to enhance outreach to the OSCE Partners for Co-operation on SALW- and SCA-related issues in line with relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions and OSCE commitments;
- Continue, within the FSC Security Dialogues, to engage in discussions on topical security issues related to SALW and SCA.

We encourage the OSCE Partners for Co-operation voluntarily to support the work in this field and join the discussion.

We would like to express our deep regret that like in 2020 also this year no consensus could be reached on a Ministerial Council Decision on SALW and SCA.

In closing, we would like to express our sincere appreciation and thanks to the Austrian FSC-Chair for its efforts undertaken to reach a compromise.

I would be grateful if you could attach this statement to the journal of the meeting.