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FSC.DEL/17/25
30 January 2025

ENGLISH
Original: RUSSIAN

Delegation of the Russian Federation

**STATEMENT BY
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RUSSIAN FEDERATION TO THE VIENNA NEGOTIATIONS ON MILITARY
SECURITY AND ARMS CONTROL, AT THE 1095th PLENARY MEETING OF
THE OSCE FORUM FOR SECURITY CO-OPERATION**

29 January 2025

Agenda item: Opening session under the Spanish Chairmanship

Mr. Chairperson,

Allow me to congratulate you on the start of your Chairmanship of the OSCE Forum for Security Co-operation (FSC). We are grateful to Spanish Foreign Minister José Manuel Albares for his detailed presentation of the priorities for the current session. We are pleased to welcome the Director of the OSCE Secretariat's Conflict Prevention Centre here in this room.

The current Chairmanship is taking the helm of the OSCE's politico-military decision-making body at a time of objectively verifiable deterioration of the international security situation. Moreover, the FSC – which is the sole platform in Europe for professional dialogue in this field – is being handed down to the Spanish delegation in a most lamentable state by the 2024 Chairmanships. Instead of making use of its potential as intended, namely to conduct serious, professional dialogue on matters of “hard” security in the OSCE area, they weaponized the Forum to settle political scores with participating States that are standing up for their sovereignty. The culmination of this irresponsible line of conduct – and an affront to the entire OSCE – was the attempt by the Danish Chairmanship to break the fundamental rule of consensus, as a result of which the FSC was in tatters for several months. I wish to warn in all seriousness that the Forum, like the OSCE as a whole, exists as long as the consensus rule holds sway, as long as each State is guaranteed that its interests will be taken into account. We trust that in this year marking the 50th anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act, at the heart of which are politico-military agreements, the successive FSC Chairmanships will be able to muster diplomatic courage and, based on the principle of the sovereign equality of States, manage to strengthen the Forum's procedural and political foundations with a view to enhancing security and developing co-operation among the participating States.

This task is all the more relevant at the present historical juncture, when there is in effect nothing left of security or co-operation in Europe. Through Western States' efforts, the politico-military strand of the OSCE's work has been almost completely unravelled. Arms control agreements key to Eurasian and Euro-Atlantic security have been destroyed. NATO countries are supplying Ukraine with weapons of increasingly greater precision and longer range, which they themselves are aiming at civilian objects, among others. We are evidently dealing with utter contempt for the premises of a responsible export control policy

as laid down in the OSCE Document on Small Arms and Light Weapons (2000), the CSCE Principles Governing Conventional Arms Transfers (1993) and the OSCE Principles for Export Controls of Man-Portable Air Defence Systems (2008). From this it may be understood why the Western participating States have, for three successive years now, been refusing to agree on the holding of OSCE meetings to review the implementation of commitments in this field.

The “Western wing” of the FSC has similarly consigned to oblivion the OSCE Principles Governing Non-Proliferation (1994). For several years now, the post of the FSC Chairperson’s co-ordinator dealing with this thematic area of work has remained vacant. And this while the States sponsoring the Kyiv regime are directly enabling missile strikes against our country’s territory by the Ukrainian armed forces, thereby risking a head-on military collision between Russia and NATO, which would mean open armed conflict between nuclear powers – something fraught with catastrophic consequences. Particular responsibility for this rests with the United States of America, the United Kingdom and France, whose leaders, by affixing their signatures on 3 January 2022 to the joint statement of the five nuclear-weapon States, pledged themselves to avoiding military confrontation between nuclear-weapon States. As the instigator of that document, the Russian Federation is adhering to an approach that is as measured and responsible as possible, demonstrating a great deal of restraint to prevent the worst-case scenario. At the same time we are obliged to give wake-up calls to the West.

Mr. Chairperson,

In the present circumstances, what is called for from the FSC Chairmanships, and likewise from the Finnish OSCE Chairmanship, are efforts to prevent the erosion of this platform. I would remind you that the goal pursued by our predecessors in the late 1980s was to achieve greater security with fewer resources by dismantling the material legacy of the Cold War and building mutual trust, to stop squandering massive resources on the risk of a senseless and self-destructive military confrontation. The Forum was created to institutionalize that process.

However, the aforementioned lofty goals have today been cast into oblivion so that NATO can continue to hog the political limelight. And with what results? The Alliance’s aggregate military expenditure already accounts for more than half of the global total. Plans have been announced to conduct a good hundred military exercises on NATO’s eastern flank in 2025, an integral purpose of which will be to rehearse military measures aimed at countering Russia. Instead of responsible work on averting military incidents, the NATO countries are moving to militarize the Baltic Sea. The question is – why? These steps not only are incompatible with the pursuit of confidence-building in the military realm and the achievement of any agreements in the politico-military sphere, but they are also debasing the significance of the documents drawn up at the FSC. An appropriate setting for discussing a range of the aforementioned issues could, in particular, be provided by the Annual Discussion on the Implementation of the Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security. We are counting on preparations for that event to get under way in the current semester.

The pronouncements made today on the conflict in Ukraine should not mislead anyone and conceal the crux of the matter, which is that the collective West has unleashed a hybrid war against the Russian Federation to preserve its world hegemony – a war that is costing the West dearly. The approaches and conduct of the Kyiv regime and the West continue to be an obstacle to a peaceful settlement. We, on the other hand, are calling for a truly definitive, just and sustainable solution involving the elimination of the root causes of the crisis. What is required are reliable, legally binding agreements and mechanisms to guarantee that there will be no renewal of the conflict, with account taken of the existing realities on the ground and based on the positions enunciated by Russian President Vladimir Putin when he spoke at the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs in June 2024.

Mr. Chairperson,

We are convinced that, despite the current international turbulence, it is possible to steer the FSC towards a resumption of professional dialogue, provided that the political will to do so is forthcoming from all the Forum's participants. The Spanish Chairmanship's actions will determine the FSC's viability amid a crisis of trust.

To that end, it is essential to make every effort to revive the Forum's full-scale activities and create favourable conditions for the fulfilment of its mandate within the framework of a traditional agenda that includes prevention of illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons and ammunition, implementation of the Code of Conduct and the execution of confidence- and security-building measures. Accordingly, we hope that our Spanish colleagues will initiate in due course a discussion – within the format of Working Group A – on holding the Annual Implementation Assessment Meeting on the Vienna Document 2011 in March.

We reiterate our position of principle that the attempts to dilute the FSC's politico-military mandate through the discussion of "gender" issues, human rights issues or environmental and climate issues are hindering it from accomplishing its original mission. In that regard, we note that Spain's proposal to discuss the topic of emerging military technologies does not formally run counter to the Forum's mandate; however, the sole specialist platform for addressing that topic is the Group of Governmental Experts on lethal autonomous weapons systems, which was established in Geneva under the Inhumane Weapons Convention. We are convinced that no added value can come from duplicating the Group in Vienna.

We have always consistently advocated observance of the principles of inclusivity and multilateralism in the FSC's activities. The Forum should not be used to advance narrow bloc interests and to further political agendas. As for representatives of regional security organizations taking part in its meetings, such participation must be balanced and include not only organizations west of Vienna.

We stress the need for balanced geographical representation among the panellists at Security Dialogues. We reserve the right to propose to the Chairmanships potential speakers from Russia on the topics that are raised for discussion.

A few words on the Informal Working Group (IWG) on the Structured Dialogue on the Current and Future Challenges and Risks to Security in the OSCE Area. We take the position that the IWG can be revived exclusively on the basis of the "Hamburg mandate" that was agreed on by the 57 participating States at the Ministerial Council meeting in 2016. The new Norwegian Chairmanship of that process should bear in mind that a possible dilution of its goals and the arbitrary exclusion of participating States from membership of the IWG will inevitably lead to these potential "gatherings" not having anything in common with the OSCE or with the Structured Dialogue as such.

Lastly, we expect the successive FSC Chairmanships in 2025 to undertake the necessary diplomatic efforts to bolster the Forum's status as a platform for addressing security issues; to work constructively and in strict compliance with the Rules of Procedure in the interests and on behalf of the entire Forum; and to facilitate, in a unifying spirit, the implementation of the goals and tasks enshrined in its mandate. If, instead, this platform is misused for political ends, that could lead to greater fragmentation and discord and put a question mark over its future.

We wish the Spanish delegation and the future Chairmanships in 2025 every success in strengthening the Forum's foundations. It goes without saying that the Troika of FSC Chairmanships can count on the Russian delegation's assistance in that respect.

Thank you for your attention.