
Chairmanship: United States of America

965th PLENARY MEETING OF THE FORUM

1. Date: Wednesday, 20 January 2021 (via video teleconference)

Opened: 11 a.m.

Closed: 12.55 p.m.

2. Chairperson: Ms. C. Austrian

Prior to taking up the agenda, the Chairperson reminded the Forum for Security Co-operation (FSC) of the technical modalities for the conduct of FSC meetings during the COVID-19 pandemic, as outlined in FSC.GAL/2/21 OSCE+.

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

Agenda item 1: OPENING REMARKS BY H.E. MR. PHILIP T. REEKER,
ACTING ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE FOR
EUROPEAN AND EURASIAN AFFAIRS, UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Chairperson, Acting Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs (Annex 1), Albania (Annex 2), United Kingdom (FSC.DEL/1/21 OSCE+), Portugal-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/12/21), Switzerland (FSC.DEL/14/21 OSCE+), Armenia (Annex 3), Azerbaijan (Annex 4), Canada, Georgia (FSC.DEL/7/21 OSCE+), Turkey (FSC.DEL/13/21 OSCE+), Sweden (Annex 5), Belarus (FSC.DEL/3/21 OSCE+), Bosnia and Herzegovina (Annex 6), Poland, Germany, Ukraine (FSC.DEL/8/21 OSCE+), Russian Federation (Annex 7), OSCE Parliamentary Assembly (PA.GAL/1/21 OSCE+)

Agenda item 2: GENERAL STATEMENTS

None

Agenda item 3: ANY OTHER BUSINESS

None

4. Next meeting:

Wednesday, 27 January 2021, at 10 a.m., via video teleconference



965th Plenary Meeting
FSC Journal No. 971, Agenda item 1

**STATEMENT BY
THE DELEGATION OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA**

Thank you Chairperson, ambassadors, and distinguished representatives, I am deeply honoured and delighted to address the Forum for Security Co-operation (FSC) at this opening session with the United States as Chairmanship. In the 1992 Helsinki Summit Declaration, this Forum was envisaged as a negotiating and consultative body on politico-military issues to enhance confidence building and co-operative security and reduce the risk of conflict in the OSCE area. Among its core tasks were goals that are even more urgently relevant today than nearly 30 years ago. I would note in particular the Helsinki focus on further development of the Vienna Document; exchange of military information; promoting military co-operation and contacts; regional security, especially in border areas, and strengthening of non-proliferation. The FSC was mandated to convene, “Goal-oriented dialogues and consultations aimed at enhancing security co-operation, including through the further encouragement of responsible and co-operative norms of behaviour on politico-military aspects of security.”

Now, that aim of “goal-oriented dialogue” to enhance security and advance “responsible and co-operative norms of behaviour” encapsulates the objectives of the United States as FSC Chairmanship.

Much has changed in the European security environment since the last US FSC Chairmanship, nearly 18 years ago. A number of the issues at the top of the US FSC agenda back then remain salient today: counterterrorism and non-proliferation; small arms and light weapons and stockpiles of conventional ammunition, to include man-portable air defence systems (MANPADS); and even the topic of emergency preparedness, as we learned during the COVID-19 pandemic, and these are all reflected in the US programme of work.

But I’ll be candid. While our priorities – like modernizing the Vienna Document, fighting terrorism, building military transparency, and addressing threats like the proliferation of small arms and light weapons – have remained the same for decades, the political climate has changed, and not for the better.

At the Tirana Ministerial Council Deputy Secretary of State Steve Biegun characterized Russia’s continuing aggression against Ukraine as the most egregious violation of sovereignty and territorial integrity within the OSCE area, observing that “flagrant

disregard for international law and for the OSCE's foundational principles have caused a broad deterioration of the European security environment.”

That erosion of Europe's security environment, in particular since 2014, is the biggest challenge we face today in this Forum. How do we change the trajectory? Rebuilding military transparency and confidence would be a good first step. That's the bread and butter of the FSC. More broadly, the participating States of the OSCE need to hold each other to account for fulfilment of the commitments they have made. There is no trust if commitments made by nations have no meaning.

Thus the US Chairmanship must confront new threats and security challenges that have come to the fore, in addition to longstanding issues and the dangers posed by stove piping our efforts to combat these threats.

Undoubtedly, insisting on the full implementation of and updating the Vienna Document has been this Forum's primary contribution over the years to confidence-building and military transparency in Europe. That contribution became even more important following Russia's purported “suspension” of its obligations under the CFE Treaty. The Vienna Document was intended to be a living document that would be periodically updated. And yet, the FSC is still reliant on the Vienna Document's 2011 iteration, which does not reflect current security challenges, and which itself reflected no substantial enhancement of the 1999 version of the Document. It is time for us to deal with this. Thirty-four participating States have co-sponsored a comprehensive proposal for an update. At the Ministerial Council last month, 45 participating States subscribed to a joint statement calling for substantial progress on modernizing the Vienna Document in 2021. It is clear that the vast majority of participating States are committed to enhancing military transparency, and wish to embark on a negotiation process to achieve that.

So why is this process blocked? The main objection voiced has nothing to do with the Vienna Document as a confidence-building tool, but rather argues that more confidence-building and transparency should not be negotiated until NATO unilaterally reduces its deterrence and defence posture. Now, NATO's modest posture changes were undertaken in response to Russia's aggression against Ukraine in 2014 and Russia's continued aggressive activities elsewhere, and NATO's changes are entirely consistent with international law and our security commitments. NATO enhanced Forward Presence (eFP) forces are present with the consent and support of host governments. They threaten no nation, militarily or otherwise. But if their role is a matter of interest, the US Chairmanship is ready to talk about it. The goal of our first regional security dialogue on 27 January is to respond directly to concerns about eFP repeatedly voiced in this Forum. We will examine the history, evolution, current status, and future plans of eFP, as well as its net contribution to European security, to dispel any misunderstandings about its entirely defensive nature. eFP poses no threat to any other participating State and presents no impediment to modernizing the Vienna Document. Quite the opposite is true – unblocking the process of Vienna Document modernization will enhance military transparency, including with respect to eFP, and reduce risks emanating from large snap exercises and unusual military activities.

Following the 27 January regional security dialogue, we will hold on 9 and 10 February the High-Level Military Doctrine Seminar (HLMDS). We are honoured to host this event during our time as Chairmanship. We see this event not as an academic exercise

but an important opportunity for military-to-military dialogue. General Tod Wolters, Commander of the US European Command, will keynote this event. Doctrine does not evolve in a geostrategic vacuum – it derives from changes in threat perceptions and emerging security challenges, and it has a direct impact on regional defence planning and armed forces structures. The agenda of this high-level seminar is focused on 4 “C’s”: we seek to foster a constructive and goal-oriented dialogue on “conventional deterrence” and “competition doctrine,” while also addressing opportunities for “co-operative security measures” and “crisis response” in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The discussion of “competition below the threshold of armed conflict” in the context of the HLMDS and a subsequent FSC Security Dialogue on confidence-building amid strategic ambiguity” invites discussion of a range of new security challenges, up to and including some discussion of “hybrid threats.” Let me respond to those that have expressed concern with our intent in initiating discussion on this topic. There is no denying that “grey zone” competition employing all elements of national power has a direct impact on politico-military aspects of security. Likewise, ambiguity about strategic intentions undermines confidence. These are real, current-day threats impacting all participating States in this Forum. We cannot afford to ignore this situation in this Forum; we must address it.

Despite these current challenges, which are by necessity at the forefront of our agenda, the FSC has continued to contribute to common security in areas such as small arms and light weapons (SALW) and non-proliferation. We will carry forward the efforts of the outgoing German FSC Chairmanship to advance the normative framework for SALW and will devote two Security Dialogues, respectively, to the longstanding and still very salient threat posed by MANPADS, a topic that harkens back to the US FSC agenda in 2003, and to the issue of explosive hazards in Central Asia, a region of geostrategic importance. We seek to ensure our FSC agenda is well-balanced, engages our partners in Central Asia, and addresses security concerns across the OSCE space.

While the world continues to shift in dramatic ways, the overriding goal of this Forum remains to enhance our common security. That goal is unachievable without the full, equal, and meaningful participation of women in the FSC and the OSCE writ large. We warmly welcome the Swedish OSCE Chairmanship-in-Office and look forward to the joint FSC and Permanent Council meeting on implementation of UN Security Council resolution 1325 on women, peace and security on the occasion of International Women’s Day in March. I would like to emphasize that this joint session will not be confined to platitudes; it will focus specifically on the concrete proposals for implementing United Nations Security Council resolution 1325 in the work of the FSC that were outlined in a Tirana Ministerial statement by 52 participating States. Let me also underscore that this joint FSC and Permanent Council meeting is not a one-off event to mark Women’s Day. Every day, we will fully integrate the expert perspectives of women in international security and demonstrate the diversity of America and the OSCE area.

To the Chairperson, I would like to join you in thanking the outgoing OSCE Chairmanship-in-Office Albania and former FSC Chairmanship Germany, as well as welcoming future FSC Chairmanships Armenia and Austria who will lead this Forum for the remainder of 2021. Finally, I must apologize for being unable to join you live today, which happens to be Inauguration Day in the United States. A new US administration will take office at noon Eastern Standard Time today, in accordance with our Constitution. But, rest

assured that our FSC programme reflects longstanding US policies and priorities. We will be sure to update you on any new administration efforts impacting the work of this body.

Thank you. Please attach this statement to the journal of the day. I thank you very much and wish you all the best.



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

FSC.JOUR/971
20 January 2021
Annex 2

Original: ENGLISH

965th Plenary Meeting

FSC Journal No. 971, Agenda item 1

STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF ALBANIA

Thank you, Madam Chairperson, and congratulations to you and your team on assuming the responsibility of chairing the FSC. We wish you every success.

Dear colleagues,

I would like to thank Ambassador Philip Reeker for introducing the programme and priorities of the US FSC Chairmanship for this first trimester of 2021.

I would also like to put on record my sincere thanks to the German FSC team for their close collaboration, professionalism and perseverance during their Chairmanship in the last trimester.

Madam Chairperson,

Albania fully supports the priorities reflected in your indicative programme, and welcomes its balance between traditional and new themes for our Security Dialogues.

We appreciate your focus on NATO's Enhanced Forward Presence. This is as an important component of NATO's defence and deterrence posture in the eastern and south-eastern parts of the Alliance territory.

But it is knowingly misunderstood by some in this Organization. And it is the target of disinformation that tries to discredit its contribution.

This FSC meeting will be an opportunity to put the record straight, and to have a frank exchange about its justification and function. Albania is proud about its participation in the battlegroup in Latvia, and we stand ready to share our positive experience.

We are glad to see that you will keep the modernization of the Vienna Document at the top of your agenda. Vienna Document 2011 is and will remain one of the most important confidence-building measures in the OSCE area.

Likewise, it is good we will continue discussions on small arms and light weapons, returning the OSCE's attention to the important area on man-portable air defence systems (MANPADS). The proliferation of these systems can fuel instability, deadly terrorism, and

organized crime, as well as posing a severe risk to civilian aviation. Those dangers demand rigorous export controls, to strengthen the security in the OSCE area and our neighbours.

We value the regional balance you will bring with a Security Dialogue on explosive hazards in Central Asia. We hope this will serve to build a better understanding of the challenge and how we could strengthen explosive ordnance disposal capabilities and stockpile security and management in the region.

Madam Chairperson,

As is well known in this Forum and from the work of our Chairmanship, Albania attaches great importance to United Nations Security Council resolution 1325 on women, peace and security in the FSC. It is particularly apt that you will dedicate a meeting to this on the occasion of the International Women's Day.

This is an agenda that should unify rather than divide us.

Myself – like many of you – was very disappointed last year at the lack of ambition and enthusiasm shown by some participating States towards this topic. I sincerely hope that they will re-evaluate their approach.

Because the FSC can and should be doing more to promote, support and improve gender equality, including by ensuring the full, equal, and meaningful participation of women in conflict resolution, peacebuilding and political processes in the OSCE area.

Madam Chairperson,

Beyond the Security Dialogues, Albania looks forward to your two other important events.

First, the High-Level Military Doctrine Seminar in February. We are encouraged to hear that there will be senior participation from across our region at the Seminar, in light of the present European security situation and the need for mutual understanding.

The second activity is the Annual Implementation and Assessment Meeting in March. This is particularly timely after the sharp decline in verification activities that we saw in 2020. We need to focus our attentions now on finding a way that we can implement our confidence-building measures even during COVID-19 disruption.

Madam Chairperson,

In closing, I want to convey Albania's unconditional support for your priorities, and to the US FSC team as you take on this important commitment.

I thank you for your attention.

I kindly ask this statement be attached to the journal of today's meeting.



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STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF ARMENIA

Madam Chairperson,

The delegation of Armenia warmly welcomes Ambassador Philip T. Reeker, Acting Assistant Secretary for European and Eurasian Affairs at the United States Department of State, and congratulates the US delegation on assuming the Chairmanship of the OSCE Forum for Security Co-operation (FSC).

The United States of America assumes the Chairmanship at a critical juncture as the erosion of the OSCE concept of comprehensive and co-operative security is becoming much more conspicuous and generating complex security challenges.

First, within the area of responsibility of the OSCE, there was the large-scale use of force against Artsakh by Azerbaijan with the direct involvement of Turkey and foreign terrorist fighters, which caused a very high death toll among both civilians and military personnel. This was to some extent the logical consequence of blatant violations of arms control regimes and of the “toolbox” of confidence- and security-building measures, as shown, among other things, by uncontrolled military build-up and lack of transparency over large-scale military exercises.

Secondly, the unapologetic use of force revealed clear shortcomings with regard to the utilization of the OSCE mechanisms and procedures for early warning and conflict prevention, as well as showed up the consequences of turning a blind eye to the constant violations of our agreed commitments.

Thirdly, despite the tireless efforts and dedication of the German FSC Chairmanship, we failed to achieve tangible results on the Forum’s contribution to the OSCE Ministerial Council meeting in Tirana. This reflects the growing disagreement in the OSCE over essential security issues and the existing crisis in the politico-military dimension. Without genuine efforts to look into and tackle these substantial problems that create an impasse in the implementation of agreed commitments, we are doomed to undermine further the concept of comprehensive and indivisible security.

With this being said I would like to draw your attention to the joint Turkish-Azerbaijani large-scale military exercise to be held from 1 to 12 February in Kars. According to the available information, it is expected to be one of the biggest winter military

exercises of recent times and is aimed, among other things, at ensuring co-operation and co-ordination of actions during joint military operations. Last year, another joint Turkish-Azerbaijani military exercise was followed by Azerbaijan's aggression against Artsakh and Armenia with the direct involvement of Turkey and foreign terrorist fighters. Against such a background, how should the decision to hold an unnotified large-scale military exercise just 50 km from the Armenian border be interpreted? This kind of activity not only violates the spirit and essence of confidence- and security-building measures, but further exacerbates the extremely fragile stability in the South Caucasus and reveals aggressive posturing and true intentions of two aggressor OSCE participating States, namely Turkey and Azerbaijan – notwithstanding all the statements here and elsewhere by those two countries on the need to promote trust and good-neighbourly relations in the region.

Madam Chairperson,

We believe that all these challenges should be addressed by strengthening the OSCE's role both as a platform for dialogue and co-operation, and as an inclusive organization. We strongly believe that commitment and goodwill are the prerequisites for restoring an environment of trust and confidence and the only way forward. Armenia looks forward to continued dialogue, under your able leadership, on security issues proceeding from the very essence of this Organization, such as confidence- and security-building.

Madam Chairperson,

We thank Ambassador Reeker for outlining the priorities of the US Chairmanship.

We view the forthcoming High-Level Military Doctrine Seminar as a timely opportunity to discuss the security situation in the OSCE area and its repercussions for military doctrines.

I would like to assure you and your team of Armenia's full support for your Chairmanship. I further wish to reiterate Armenia's readiness to work together with the United States, especially on small arms and light weapons, the Vienna Document and United Nations Security Council resolution 1325, which are all topics that we intend to take up during Armenia's FSC Chairmanship later in the year.

In closing, allow me to wish you, Madam Chairperson, and your able team here in Vienna and in Washington, DC, every success during your tenure. Armenia looks forward to co-operating closely with the United States FSC Chairmanship and the Troika members.

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

Thank you.



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STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF AZERBAIJAN

Madam Chairperson,

I wish to extend our congratulations to you and your team on the occasion of assuming the Chairmanship of the Forum for Security Co-operation (FSC).

The delegation of Azerbaijan welcomes Ambassador Philip Reeker's address of the FSC, thanks him for laying out the Chairmanship priorities and wishes the United States of America every success in leading the work of our Forum in the coming trimester.

Taking this opportunity, we thank the outgoing Chairmanship of Germany and previous Troika members and Chairmanships of Turkey and Ukraine for their contribution to the FSC in 2020. We are looking forward to establishing a working relationship with Armenia as a new Troika member, in support of the implementation of the two trilateral agreements signed on 10 November 2020 and 11 January 2021, and with a view to normalizing relations between our countries.

We find the Chairmanship programme presented by the United States well-balanced and addressing a spectrum of issues of high importance and relevance to the work of the OSCE in general and the FSC in particular. We note the importance of such topics as the Vienna Document, small arms and light weapons (SALW), man-portable air defence systems (MANPADS), confidence- and security-building amid strategic ambiguity. We also support the attention to the implementation of United Nations Security Council resolution 1325 on the women, peace and security agenda. A joint meeting of the FSC and the Permanent Council dedicated to this topic will help to further streamline it within the OSCE.

Azerbaijan is ready to support the US FSC Chairmanship's efforts aimed at strengthening the Organization's politico-military dimension and enhancing the implementation of our shared commitments, while upholding the values and foundational principles that our Organization stands on – first and foremost, those laid down in the Helsinki Final Act. The principles governing inter-State relations, in particular those related to respect for sovereignty, territorial integrity and inviolability of internationally recognized borders, remain the basis for our co-operation.

Due to failure to apply the aforementioned principles without double standards to all conflicts in the OSCE area and provocative actions taken by Armenia, which undermined the

peace process last year, Azerbaijan was compelled to restore through politico-military means its infringed sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders, eliminating nearly thirty years of occupation of its territories. The trilateral statements of 10 November 2020 and 11 January 2021 have put an end to the conflict and set agreed parameters for establishing durable peace in the region.

Thus, for Azerbaijan the year 2021 will be marked by active engagement with partners in the phase of post-conflict rehabilitation and comprehensive development of the conflict-affected territories. Azerbaijan continues to believe in the OSCE's potential in this area and the Organization's broad experience in realizing confidence-building measures. To this end, we attach importance to the FSC's support to forging confidence and security and contributing to the implementation of the trilateral statements in order to help regional peace and stability to take hold. Azerbaijan hopes that the United States in its capacity of the FSC Chairmanship will render support to this process and facilitate the practical engagement of the OSCE in the post-conflict rehabilitation phase in Azerbaijan, including through targeted assistance projects.

In closing, we once again thank Ambassador Philip Reeker for his address of the Forum and wish him and his able team in Vienna a successful FSC Chairmanship.

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

Thank you, Madam Chairperson.



**Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
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STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF SWEDEN

Sweden fully aligns itself with the European Union's statement and would like to state the following in its capacity as the 2020 OSCE Chairmanship:

Dear colleagues,
Dear Ms. Austrian,

It was an honour to officially launch the Swedish OSCE Chairmanship last Thursday. I thank you all for taking part in that opening event and for the overwhelming support and encouragement that we have received since then.

Participating in the Forum for Security Co-operation (FSC) for the first time as the OSCE Chairmanship, Sweden once again thanks Germany for its excellent chairing of the Forum. At the same time, we should like to wish the United States of America the best of luck for the coming trimester and warmly welcome Armenia into the FSC Troika. We are looking forward to an open-minded and fruitful co-operation.

The situation in Europe today and the challenges it presents are very different from those faced by our region in the 1990s. The importance of our Organization and of our commitments, however, remains unchanged.

In a situation where multilateral co-operation and international law are increasingly being defied, and our agreements and instruments for strengthening security are being called into question, we need to remind ourselves why we designed them in the first place.

As stated last week by the Swedish Minister for Foreign Affairs, H.E. Ms. Ann Linde, our priorities for the OSCE Chairmanship include focusing on our common principles and joint commitments in accordance with the Helsinki Final Act and the Charter of Paris for a New Europe; upholding the OSCE concept of comprehensive security; supporting the OSCE's autonomous institutions; promoting gender equality; and contributing to and facilitating conflict resolution – a major priority for Sweden's year at the helm of our Organization.

The conflict cycle toolbox remains as relevant as ever, and we are determined to make full use of it in our efforts to resolve and prevent conflicts and crises. Significantly, the confidence- and security-building measures adopted under the aegis of the OSCE are coming

under increasing pressure. The FSC is an extremely important platform for addressing many of these fundamental issues, and we will support the FSC Chairmanships in their challenging work.

The privilege of deciding on the agenda for the coming twelve months belongs not only to the OSCE Chairmanship but also – and rightly so – to the FSC Chairmanship. For obvious reasons, it is advantageous if the priorities chosen by the two are thematically adjacent. We therefore welcome the fact that many of the focus areas identified by the United States coincide with Sweden's priorities, and we are convinced that we can work well together and offer each other mutual support on many important issues.

One priority is women, peace and security, which on 10 March will be the subject of a joint meeting of the FSC and the Permanent Council. The intensive work carried out in preparing the politico-military text on this topic for the Ministerial Council meeting in Tirana demonstrated that there are challenges we need to overcome. The fact that, despite garnering comprehensive support, we were unable to reach consensus on a Ministerial Council declaration indicates that thorough analysis and a joint effort are now required to move that agenda forward. We firmly believe that there is more to be done.

As already mentioned, Sweden has been crystal clear in stating the need to return to the core principles and rules of the OSCE and to promote confidence- and security-building measures. At the core of the first dimension lies implementation of the Vienna Document. Important discussions are ongoing on how to improve the way in which the current version of the Vienna Document is used, and we will continue to actively support the work on undertaking a potential review of certain aspects of this instrument.

Addressing the secure storage and handling of ammunitions and small arms and light weapons is also essential. Although the initiative for the adoption of a relevant document at the Tirana Ministerial Council stumbled at the finish line, it enjoyed extensive support and that surely constitutes a solid base for future efforts. Sweden will continue to be an active partner in this field.

Finally, as we are fully supporting the efforts of the United States in the FSC and the path forward it has traced, we declare our readiness to enter into a dialogue with Armenia and Austria. We will listen with an open mind to the thoughts you as the next incoming Chairmanships of the FSC may have on topics and priorities for the Forum's work this year.

In the end, it is all a matter of our commitments, our security and our OSCE.

We are looking forward to co-operating with you all – good luck and thank you.

Please attach this statement to the journal of the day.



**Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
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Annex 6

Original: ENGLISH

965th Plenary Meeting
FSC Journal No. 971, Agenda item 1

**STATEMENT BY
THE DELEGATION OF BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA**

The delegation of Bosnia and Herzegovina would like to thank the Acting Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs of the United States Department of State, Ambassador Philip T. Reeker, for setting out his country's priorities for its Chairmanship of the OSCE Forum for Security Co-operation (FSC) in the first trimester of 2021. We join in the congratulations to our US colleagues on their assumption of this responsible task.

We should like once again to express our appreciation to Germany for its excellent chairing of the FSC during the previous trimester, and we also welcome Armenia as a new member of the FSC Troika.

We take note of the tentative schedule of FSC meetings distributed by the Chairmanship, which covers a number of important issues relating to regional and pan-European security. We welcome several of the goals that you have laid down in your programme, including goals pertaining to small arms and light weapons (SALW), new technologies, United Nations Security Council resolution 1325 and the Structured Dialogue. In our view, it is very important to continue engaging in dialogue within the OSCE with a view to defusing tensions and restoring trust. The implementation of existing commitments in the politico-military dimension is the only way to increase military transparency and political stability in the OSCE area. Further development of conventional arms control regimes, confidence- and security-building measures, and other instruments in the OSCE's politico-military "toolbox" is of the utmost importance. With regard to subregional arms control, we should not forget the OSCE's contribution to the successful implementation of Articles IV and V of the Dayton Peace Agreement.

From the perspective of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and indeed from that of South-Eastern Europe as a whole, projects focused on SALW and stockpiles of conventional ammunition (SCA) are an important part of the OSCE's work. We were happy to hear from Ambassador Reeker today that the United States of America intends to continue the great work done on this portfolio by Germany as the preceding FSC Chairmanship. We regret that at the last Ministerial Council meeting in Tirana it did not prove possible to reach agreement on a Ministerial Council decision on the normative aspects of SALW and SCA. In that respect, we wish to second the call on all OSCE participating States to engage in discussions at the FSC, the first such opportunity being during the thematic session next month. We are

grateful for all the assistance provided with the implementation of SALW projects in our country, and we remain committed to achieving very good results in this field.

Madam Chairperson,

We wish you and your team a successful FSC Chairmanship: you can count without fail on the support of the delegation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. I kindly ask you to attach this statement to the journal of the day.

Thank you.



**Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
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FSC.JOUR/971
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Annex 7

ENGLISH
Original: RUSSIAN

965th Plenary Meeting
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**STATEMENT BY
THE DELEGATION OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION**

Madam Chairperson,

We congratulate the delegation of the United States of America on the start of its Chairmanship of the OSCE Forum for Security Co-operation (FSC). We welcome Ambassador Philip T. Reeker, Acting Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs, and thank him for outlining the Chairmanship's priorities for the current session.

First of all, I feel it necessary to respond to the comments made by distinguished Ambassador Reeker and a number of delegations, and also to draw attention to the fact that the Republic of Crimea and the federal city of Sevastopol have full status as constituent entities of the Russian Federation. This is not up for discussion. They were incorporated into our country in accordance with the will of their multi-ethnic peoples and with the norms of international law. This decision is fully in keeping with Article 1 of the Charter of the United Nations, which proclaims "respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples". We consider any attempts to call into question the territorial integrity of the Russian Federation to be absolutely unacceptable. The choice made by the Crimean people to unite with Russia is completely legitimate. We would suggest not wasting time on futile discussions and urge you to respect this. In concluding this topic, I should like to point out that Republic of Crimea Day is celebrated today. I congratulate the Crimean people and all our compatriots on this joyous occasion.

Now let me turn to the main part of my statement on the subject of today's meeting.

We trust that, in spite of the differences in the approaches of the OSCE countries to assessing the current pan-European security situation, the forthcoming discussions will take place in accordance with the current FSC mandate and will help to strengthen its role as a platform for constructive dialogue. In the present circumstances, the role of Chairmanship, which is meant to take into account the interests of all participating States, focus on the search for compromises and facilitate the Organization's return to a culture of mutually respectful dialogue, is of undoubted importance. We hope that our distinguished US colleagues will structure their work in the Forum in precisely this way over the next few months. Imposing unilateral approaches in a high-handed manner will not work any more now than it has done in the past.

We listened with interest to the statement by the Assistant Secretary of State about the main areas of the Forum's work under the US Chairmanship, which is responsible for organizing a number of major politico-military events. First of all, there is the OSCE High-Level Military Doctrine Seminar – held, as a rule, every five years – which will provide an opportunity to examine pressing aspects of the current politico-military situation in the OSCE area and changes in doctrinal documents brought about by the evolution of threats, the changing forms of conflicts and the emergence of new technologies. Unfortunately, we are compelled to note that not all of the topics and issues included in the Seminar's programme are directly concerned with military doctrine, and some of them clearly have confrontational potential. At the same time, we believe that the US Chairmanship, as the initiator of that event, will demonstrate the necessary flexibility and conduct the Seminar in a constructive spirit, and that its subject matter will serve as material for further discussion in the FSC.

We expect practical issues in the implementation of the Vienna Document 2011 to be considered in a professional manner during the Annual Implementation Assessment Meeting (AIAM), which is the key event in the annual cycle of events within the OSCE politico-military dimension. Our position in principle on the modernization of the Vienna Document 2011 remains unchanged and is well known to our colleagues. As long as NATO tries to flex its muscles on our borders, there will be no serious discussion on this topic.

We note the intention to organize a discussion on small arms and light weapons (SALW) and stockpiles of conventional ammunition (SCA). For our part, we confirm our readiness to continue joint work on updating the OSCE Best Practice Guides in this area.

At the same time, the Chairmanship's plans to use the Forum to legitimize the security imbalances that have emerged in Europe raise some doubts. We also have doubts that all of the topics proposed by the Chairmanship for discussion within the Security Dialogue fall within the competence of the FSC and are in line with its mandate. We expect our concerns in this regard to be fully taken into account. Please be advised that the Russian Federation will agree only on those issues that are in the interests, first and foremost, of our country's security and not on those that our partners try to foist on us.

Discussions of the politico-military aspects of the crisis in Ukraine will continue during the FSC session ahead of us. We believe it necessary to focus these discussions on real, objective facts, rather than on conjecture, politicization and attempts at provoking tensions without reason. As for the prospects of a settlement of the situation in Donbas, we see no alternative to the implementation of the Minsk agreements. Against the backdrop of the cacophony of utterances to be heard from Kyiv by high-ranking officials about the fact that the framework for a settlement of the internal Ukrainian conflict is "null and void", we expect clear assessments of Ukraine's destructive policy from France and Germany as co-mediators in the "Normandy format". Any ideas of withdrawing "into the shadows" or hiding "under a sunken log", as Minister Sergey Lavrov recently said, will not work. It is also our understanding that the Ukrainian Government and the authorities in Donetsk and Luhansk will take a responsible approach to the implementation of the additional measures to strengthen the ceasefire regime, and that the ceasefire will continue to be consistently respected, as this would make it possible to resolve with greater effectiveness other issues within the framework of a settlement of the conflict.

For our part, we are ready to make the necessary efforts in facilitating a substantive, open and inclusive dialogue on current security issues in the OSCE area. As is customary, we shall endeavour to share our country's experience in those areas where we have built up a considerable body of positive work.

In conclusion, allow me to express our gratitude once again to Ambassador Reeker for his detailed outline of the US Chairmanship's priorities, and to wish the distinguished US delegation success in the responsible function of chairing the Forum. We stand ready to provide all the assistance that may be required from us. We look forward to working closely and productively with you, Madam Chairperson, and with the distinguished members of the Troika. We should like to take this opportunity to extend a warm welcome to the delegation of Armenia as the new participant in the Troika.

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. I request that this statement be attached to the journal of the day.