

Chairmanship: Azerbaijan

1002nd PLENARY MEETING OF THE FORUM

1. Date: Wednesday, 23 February 2022 (in the Neuer Saal and via video teleconference)

Opened: 10 a.m.
Suspended: 1 p.m.
Resumed: 3 p.m.
Closed: 3.45 p.m.

2. Chairperson: Ambassador R. Sadigbayli
Mr. F. Osmanov

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

Agenda item 1: SECURITY DIALOGUE: “COUNTERING TERRORISM IN ALL ITS FORMS AND MANIFESTATIONS”

- *Presentation by Mr. T. Musayev, Deputy Permanent Representative of the Republic of Azerbaijan to the United Nations*
- *Presentation by Mr. M. Koç, Deputy Director General for Security and Intelligence, Turkish Foreign Ministry*
- *Presentation by Mr. Y. Rafiyev, Director of the International Security Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan*

Chairperson, Mr. T. Musayev, Mr. M. Koç, Mr. Y. Rafiyev, United States of America (FSC.DEL/103/22 OSCE+), United Kingdom, France-European Union (with the candidate countries Albania, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia and Turkey; the country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate country Bosnia and Herzegovina; 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/108/22), Switzerland (FSC.DEL/111/22 OSCE+), Turkey, Russian Federation (Annex 1), Armenia (Annex 2)

Agenda item 2: GENERAL STATEMENTS

- (a) *Situation in and around Ukraine*: Ukraine (FSC.DEL/106/22), United States of America (Annex 3), United Kingdom (Annex 4), France-European Union (with the candidate countries Albania, Montenegro and North Macedonia; the European Free Trade Association countries Iceland and Norway, members of the European Economic Area; as well as Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine, in alignment) (Annex 5), Canada (Annex 6), Lithuania (Annex 7), Russian Federation (Annex 8), Georgia, France (also on behalf of Germany) (Annex 9)
- (b) *Right of reply to the statement made by the Russian Federation at the 1001st plenary meeting of the Forum for Security Co-operation under agenda item 1, Security Dialogue: “European security architecture: The role of non-aligned countries”*: Sweden (Annex 10), Finland (Annex 11)

Agenda item 3: ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- (a) *Update on an FSC e-learning course on conventional arms control and confidence- and security-building measures and other FSC topics*: Representative of the Conflict Prevention Centre
- (b) *Resumption of verification activities in Azerbaijan*: Azerbaijan
- (c) *Update on the responses of certain participating States to the current situation along the Ukrainian border*: United Kingdom, Canada, United States of America, Germany
- (d) *Meeting of the Informal Group of Friends on Small Arms and Light Weapons and Stockpiles of Conventional Ammunition, to be held via video teleconference on 24 February 2022 (FSC.GAL/23/22 Restr.)*: Chairperson of the Informal Group of Friends on Small Arms and Light Weapons and Stockpiles of Conventional Ammunition (Latvia)
- (e) *Review of the activation by the Baltic States of paragraph 16.3 of the Vienna Document 2011 on Confidence- and Security-Building Measures, in Chapter III, section 1, “Mechanism for consultation and co-operation as regards unusual military activities”, concerning a meeting of all participating States*: Lithuania, Latvia
- (f) *Request for assistance in enhancing the capacity of the national authorities of Azerbaijan in implementing explosive hazards risk reduction and responsive actions*: Armenia (Annex 12), Azerbaijan (Annex 13), Chairperson

4. Next meeting:

Wednesday, 16 March 2022, at 10 a.m., in the Neuer Saal and via video teleconference



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

FSC.JOUR/1008
23 February 2022
Annex 1

ENGLISH
Original: RUSSIAN

1002nd Plenary Meeting
FSC Journal No. 1008, Agenda item 1

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

Mr. Chairperson,

We are grateful for the organization of today's meeting on so relevant a topic for the OSCE area as counter-terrorism. We thank the distinguished keynote speakers for their substantive contribution to the discussion.

Despite international and national efforts, we continue to face serious challenges from the terrorist "International". We are convinced that our Organization's counter-terrorism activities should adhere strictly to the guidelines for international co-operation developed by the United Nations and its Security Council. We note with satisfaction the United Nations General Assembly's adoption by consensus, on 30 June 2021, of a resolution on the seventh review of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy.

At the same time, it should be noted that over the past few years the OSCE has slackened the pace of its work on increasing its counter-terrorism capacity, demonstrating that it is unprepared to respond effectively to new transborder security challenges and getting increasingly sidetracked by secondary aspects of counter-terrorism borrowed from liberal political postures. As a result, it has not proved possible to adopt a single relevant Ministerial Council document on counter-terrorism since 2016. This state of affairs merely confirms that the topic unfortunately continues to be politicized. However, it is necessary to bear in mind that the fragmentation of the international counter-terrorism community and the application of double standards play into the hands of terrorists.

Year after year, a number of countries persistently hamstring all Russian initiatives and appeals to move on to open and depoliticized dialogue in this field. Let us take, for example, the draft declaration on preventing and combating the use of the Internet for terrorist purposes that was proposed by Russia together with a group of like-minded countries for adoption by the Ministerial Council in Stockholm and was intended to intensify the OSCE's efforts to curb this threat in the Organization's area of responsibility. It is quite obvious that the World Wide Web is becoming one of the most effective tools of the terrorist "International" for attracting financial support, carrying out propaganda, recruitment and co-ordinating remotely the actions of its cells. Consequently, this field warrants close attention. However, despite the clear interest shown by most participating States in discussing

the topic, individual Western partners effectively blocked further work on the text without submitting any comments whatsoever on its substance. It is nevertheless our understanding that this topic, which is unquestionably one element of a unifying agenda, will be discussed in the course of the year during the Polish OSCE Chairmanship.

We for our part intend to continue contributing to common counter-terrorism efforts and are ready to co-operate constructively with all interested parties at the OSCE, which possesses a robust set of political commitments and the capacity to assist participating States in tackling this undeniable scourge.

Thank you for your attention.



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

FSC.JOUR/1008
23 February 2022
Annex 2

Original: ENGLISH

1002nd Plenary Meeting
FSC Journal No. 1008, Agenda item 1

**STATEMENT BY
THE DELEGATION OF ARMENIA**

Dear colleagues,

The composition of today's panel is very symbolic and speaks for itself.

Since the end of the war of aggression unleashed by Azerbaijan in 2020, we have seen desperate attempts by the country's authorities to deny or justify the recruitment, transfer and use of foreign terrorist fighters in their war against Artsakh and its people, not least by portraying Azerbaijan as a country that supports and contributes to global anti-terrorism efforts. Today's Security Dialogue is one such effort, which cannot be convincing to anyone but today's speakers.

Dear colleagues,

Azerbaijan is a country with rich experience and a considerable track record in the recruitment and use of mercenaries and foreign terrorist fighters (FTFs). We recall that thousands of terrorists, including from Afghanistan and Chechnya, were used by Azerbaijan against Artsakh back in the 1990s during the first Karabakh war. Moreover, Azerbaijan has widely exploited the religious factor, the concept of "Muslim solidarity" and jihadist ideology to gain support in its aggressive war against the people of Artsakh.

The transfer and use of foreign terrorist fighters by Azerbaijan, both before and during the 2020 Karabakh war, has been widely reported and documented by independent journalists and international media such as Reuters, *The Guardian*, BBC, Fox News, *The Washington Post* and many others, and has been acknowledged and confirmed by governments and law enforcement agencies of several countries. According to various estimates, up to four thousand FTFs were recruited in northern Syria and Libya and transferred to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict zone. They were promised a monthly payment of 1,500 to 2,500 US dollars, as well as an additional 100 US dollars for each severed head of an Armenian. The study of the personal data of some of the terrorist fighters transferred to Azerbaijan showed that many of them had been engaged and had gained combat experience during the hostilities in Syria, Iraq and Libya. Foreign terrorist fighters were integrated into the force structure of the armed forces of Azerbaijan, in particular the border troops, and provided not only with appropriate uniforms but also with weapons and ammunition, which is

a clear example of the illegal transfer and diversion of small arms and light weapons into the hands of terrorists.

In order for the above-mentioned operations to be carried out successfully, the necessary financial and logistical support was provided through various individuals and organizations involved in bulk cash smuggling and money laundering, and through the abuse of non-profit organizations of a social, cultural or charitable kind.

It should be stressed that two Syrian Arab fighters captured during the hostilities in Artsakh provided detailed information, during interrogation, on their recruitment and involvement in the fighting on the side of Azerbaijan. The detained foreign terrorist fighters, in particular, provided the following information:

- Salary: 1,500 to 2,500 US dollars per month;
- Term: six-month with the option of a one-time extension, rotation after six months;
- Age requirements: 18–40 years;
- Most of the militants were members of the “Sultan Murad”, “Sultan Suleyman Shah” and “Al-Hamza” terrorist groups;
- In some cases, people from refugee camps in Syria were also recruited. Given the harsh living conditions in northern Syria, the main motivation for their recruitment was the relatively high salary. This information was also confirmed by the United Nations Working Group on the use of mercenaries.

Dear colleagues,

In an attempt to divert the attention of the international community from its own crimes, Azerbaijan has launched a campaign against the Armenian diaspora organizations, including charitable foundations, and against Armenian nationals living abroad, presenting them as mercenaries.

Meanwhile, Azerbaijan has not provided any facts to support its claims other than so-called “credible” reports by government-controlled media.

Many of the Armenian diaspora organizations that Azerbaijan is trying to target have been working in the field of charity and humanitarian relief for many decades. First they provided humanitarian aid to the survivors of the Armenian Genocide, and then to the people of Armenia and Artsakh to overcome the consequences of the 1988 devastating earthquake in Armenia, war, and ongoing aggression by Azerbaijan. They also have a fairly impressive track record of contributing to the development and prosperity of the many host countries and societies in which they live.

Dear colleagues,

The use of FTFs in the OSCE area should have triggered action by the relevant OSCE mechanisms and participating States, at least in the form of strong and unequivocal

condemnation. Unfortunately, this has not been the case. And during the last meeting of the Forum for Security Co-operation, the Deputy Foreign Minister of Azerbaijan was very clear in explaining the reasons for the lack of an adequate response by the international community to his country's aggression, war crimes and human rights violations in Artsakh. In this regard, we regret to note that the positions of the OSCE and some of its participating States are too often conditioned by political and economic expediency rather than by the Organization's principles. In conclusion, the delegation of Armenia would like to express the hope that the failure of the OSCE to adequately respond to the use of foreign terrorist fighters in the context of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict will not lead to FTFs being deployed in other conflicts and to an increase in terrorist threats in the OSCE area.

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



1002nd Plenary Meeting
FSC Journal No. 1008, Agenda item 2(a)

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

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

The international community has uniformly condemned Russia's purported recognition of the so-called Donetsk and Luhansk "republics" and its dispatch of so-called "peacekeepers" to the sovereign territory of Ukraine. Far from keeping any "peace," this move by President Putin is clearly Russia's attempt to create a pretext for a further invasion of Ukraine. In a single sweep of hand, Putin has torn the Minsk agreements to shreds. This decision is a clear further attack on Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity. As such, Putin's diktat is a flagrant rejection of the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and of the Helsinki principles we hold dear.

Indeed, as Secretary Blinken noted yesterday, in the past 24 hours President Putin has undermined 30 years of diplomacy between Russia, Europe and the North Atlantic.

Russia's wholly unprovoked military build-up in and near Ukraine has escalated this contrived crisis of Russia's own making to a critical point. Russia has now amassed the manpower and materiel to launch a full-scale invasion. Russia is seeking to upend the European security order by force of arms and in clear violation of its international commitments to respect Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity. In his pronouncements Putin rejects Ukraine's nationhood as a fiction and seeks the restoration of a Russian Empire. Is this what Russia envisages as "indivisible security" in Europe?

Do not lecture us about "indivisibility" when you seek to divide this community, use military force to breach the borders of a sovereign neighbour, carve up its territory and establish a sphere of influence where Moscow decides the political choices of all. Do not lecture us about "security," when you threaten international peace and security.

With well over a hundred battalion tactical groups assembled along Ukraine's borders to the east, to the north inside Belarus and to the south, Russia is poised to precipitate the largest military campaign in Europe in decades. Russia's conduct of an exercise of its nuclear forces during this period of high tensions is just another example of Putin's reckless and destabilizing behaviour. Meanwhile, on the ground in eastern Ukraine, we see page after page of the Russian playbook unfold, one fabricated claim after another in its unrelenting campaign of denial and deception. And then we see real escalation with alarming increases in

ceasefire violations instigated by the forces Russia leads and fights alongside. And then the dispatch of Russian military forces under the guise of so-called “peacekeepers.”

Let us be clear who is responsible for military escalation. Let us be clear who refused to engage in consultations and co-operation regarding its highly unusual military activities; who boycotted the joint meeting of the Forum for Security Co-operation and the Permanent Council held in accordance with the Vienna Document paragraph 16 risk reduction mechanism on Friday; who indeed tried to cast a legitimate request by Ukraine to reduce risks as a “provocation” or escalation. Last week, we heard our Russian colleague affirm in this Forum that Russia would “never engage in risk reduction.” The truth is clear: Russia has blatantly disregarded its Vienna Document commitments because it has no interest in, nor intention of, reducing risks. It seeks to sow conflict and even use its Vienna Document communications as part of its propaganda campaign to fabricate a *casus belli*.

Belarus likewise sought to cast the Baltic States’ invocation of the paragraph 16 risk reduction mechanism as unwarranted and offered no substantive responses to the concerns raised by the unusual Russian military mobilization on its territory, including the build-up of Russian forces on Belarus’s southern border with Ukraine. If Belarus does not wish to be complicit in Russian aggression, it will heed recommendations from the joint meeting of the Forum for Security Co-operation and the Permanent Council to transparently and verifiably account for these highly unusual activities. Only in so doing, can Belarus confirm that its territory will not be used as a staging ground for further Russian invasion of Ukraine.

Unfortunately, Belarus has announced that it is allowing the indefinite extension of Russian deployments that Belarus had previously notified would leave its territory upon completion of the “Union Resolve” exercise, which was supposed to happen on 20 February. Now Belarus is pointing to NATO deployments in the eastern European region as “a factor” with respect to continued deployment of Russian forces. This is a transparent ruse: Russia, with Belarus’ support, escalates military tensions in Europe to an unprecedented degree – prompting NATO to take defensive steps to deter aggression – and then Belarus and Russia point to defensive measures to further escalate tensions. We have heard this refrain time and again – including with respect to the provision of defensive assistance to Ukraine: Russia provokes a crisis and then claims others fuel its own aggressive actions.

We urge both Russia and Belarus to step back from the brink. It is not too late to engage in diplomacy rather than wage a war. It is not too late to avert the humanitarian catastrophe and severe consequences war would unleash.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.



1002nd Plenary Meeting
FSC Journal No. 1008, Agenda item 2(a)

**STATEMENT BY
THE DELEGATION OF THE UNITED KINGDOM**

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson. This statement is delivered under the topic raised by Ukraine.

Mr. Chairperson, President Putin's decision to recognize the self-proclaimed "Donetsk People's Republic" and "Luhansk People's Republic" as independent States has profoundly undermined the Minsk agreements. The United Kingdom strongly condemns this action. It is also a repugnant failure of Russia to abide by its commitments under the Lisbon Framework for Arms Control which reaffirmed the fundamental principles enshrined in the Helsinki Final Act and Paris Charter.

Russia's claims of a Ukrainian threat to the Donbas region are a fabrication, an obvious pretext for their own aggressive action. As Chief Monitor Çevik made clear at the special Permanent Council meeting on Monday, the Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine (SMM) has not observed any evidence of unusual military activity on the government-controlled side of the line of contact.

Moreover the vast majority of weapons in violation of withdrawal lines and outside designated storage sites observed by the SMM continue to be in non-government controlled areas. Between 14 and 20 February, 87 of the 121 weapons observed by the SMM in violation of withdrawal lines were in areas held by Russian-backed armed formations and 305 of the 321 weapons observed outside designated storage sites belonged to the Russian-backed armed formations. This builds on trends the Mission has already identified – between 9 September and 12 January 83 per cent of weapons observed by the Mission in violation of withdrawal lines were in areas held by the Russian-backed armed formations. Moreover, the number of weapons observed by the Mission in training areas belonging to the armed formations in November and December doubled compared to September and October.

If it were Ukraine supposedly building tensions and making preparations for an offensive, why were the majority of the heavy weapons and live-fire exercises observed by the Mission in the last few months in areas held by Russian-backed armed formations? Moreover, why on earth would Ukraine choose now, as Russia has massed the largest build-up of troops on the European continent since the end of the Cold War, to launch an offensive?

Reports now indicate that Russia has amassed nearly 200,000 troops organized into over a hundred battalion tactical groups, some assessments estimate this is approximately 60 per cent of Russia's total land combat capability. We also see the deployment of huge amounts of heavy weaponry (including tactical ballistic missile systems), and combat support elements. Russia has also deployed extraordinary amounts of air power to the area and amassed an unprecedented amphibious capability in the Black Sea.

This situation is not just "unusual". It is threatening and dangerous to Ukraine, and a challenge to global security and the international order. In the face of this, we must commend Ukraine for their remarkable restraint. Last week we saw commendable attempts to reduce the risk of miscalculation and de-escalate tensions through two initiations of the Vienna Document risk reduction mechanism. We are extremely disappointed that neither achieved desired outcomes. Moreover, the United Kingdom deplores the attempts by Russia to use the OSCE network as another channel to spread its disinformation.

At this point, it is also worth noting that, despite Belarus's claims throughout last week that it was being fully transparent, we were disappointed to learn that Russian troops and equipment deployed for exercise "Union Resolve 2022" remain in place on Ukraine's northern border, with some reports indicating further forward deployment. In fact, the Deputy Commander of the Belarusian Air Force has stated that a second phase of exercise "Union Resolve" is about to be "released" and has stated that "extra groups" will be created on the Ukrainian border and border protection will be enforced as part of the exercise.

Mr. Chairperson, Russia has created a hostile and fragile security environment which is threatening and dangerous to Ukraine, the security of the entire OSCE area and a challenge to global security and the international order.

The United Kingdom, along with many others, have repeatedly warned that any Russian military incursion into Ukraine would be a massive strategic mistake and would come at a severe cost. We, in close co-ordination with the European Union and the United States of America, announced yesterday tough new sanctions. These will be a first step, with more to follow if Russia does not pull back.

Mr. Chairperson, it is clear that the only way forward is to pursue a path of diplomacy and that de-escalation by Russia now is required for successful dialogue. The OSCE remains the appropriate, and importantly an inclusive and equal platform for discussions on European security. We must defend the principle that there should be no discussions about security without the countries concerned being present. In this regard, we fully support the Chairmanship's Renewed OSCE European Security Dialogue.

Mr. Chairperson, the United Kingdom strongly supports Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders, including its territorial waters. We do not and will not recognize Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea or its recognition of the self-proclaimed "Donetsk People's Republic" and "Luhansk People's Republic". The United Kingdom has consistently stood with Ukraine in opposing all instances of Russian aggression towards Ukraine and we will continue to do so, including through sanctions, together with our international partners. Ukraine are our friends and partners and we will continue to help them defend themselves.



1002nd Plenary Meeting
FSC Journal No. 1008, Agenda item 2(a)

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

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

Mr. Chairperson,

There is no ambiguity about the origins of the current crisis. It stems from Russia's continuous, blatant breach of international law and disregard of OSCE principles and commitments. The Helsinki Final Act is crystal clear in stating that "the participating States will refrain in their mutual relations, as well as in their international relations in general, from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any State, or in any other manner inconsistent with the purposes of the United Nations".

For the last few months, we have been witnessing an unprovoked and unjustified large-scale military build-up by Russia near the border with Ukraine, including in Belarus and in and around the illegally annexed Crimean peninsula as well as Russia's increased military presence in the Black and Azov Seas. Instead of upholding its commitments and engaging in an honest dialogue, including within the transparency mechanisms on unusual military activities as set out in the Vienna Document, the Russian Federation chose again to boycott the meetings in question, which was disrespectful to the Organization and all participating States.

This week, with the conflict entering its ninth year, we saw another unprecedented escalation. The decision by the Russian Federation to recognize certain areas of Ukraine's Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts as independent entities and sending Russian troops there is illegal and unacceptable. It violates international law, Ukraine's territorial integrity and sovereignty, contradicts Russia's own international commitments and further escalates the crisis. It also violates and undermines the Minsk agreements, which are the basis for lasting peace and stability. Russia, as a signatory of the Minsk agreements, has a clear and direct responsibility to work to find a peaceful settlement of the conflict it started, in line with these principles.

We urge Russia, as a party to the conflict, to reverse the recognition, uphold its commitments, abide by international law and return to the negotiating table, engaging in

discussions within the Normandy format and the Trilateral Contact Group. We call on other States not to follow Russia's illegal decision to recognize this self-proclaimed independence.

Mr. Chairperson, we should all be worried when a nuclear nation is calling another nation a historical mistake which has to be fixed. It is no time to sit on the fence.

The European Union and its Member States are united and determined to react with a robust and swift response to the illegal actions by the Russian Federation, in close co-ordination with international partners. A first package of sanctions will be adopted without delay.

We warn Russia against using the newly signed pacts with the self-proclaimed "republics" as a pretext for taking further military steps against Ukraine. The European Union stands ready to swiftly adopt more wide-ranging political and economic sanctions.

Over the past few weeks, we witnessed intensive diplomatic efforts, including at the highest political levels, to resolve the unprecedented tensions in the region. The European Union and its Member States strongly support the path of dialogue and diplomacy – it is the only way to solve this crisis. It is up to Russia to seize this chance, the door for dialogue remains open. We recall that our Organization, due to its inclusiveness and its comprehensive approach to security, is well-equipped to discuss security concerns of any participating State. We applaud the efforts of the Polish OSCE Chairmanship in this regard and call upon all participating States to engage constructively in this initiative to restore peace and trust.

Mr. Chairperson, the increasingly dire security and humanitarian situation in eastern Ukraine is alarming. We've witnessed in recent days a dramatic increase in ceasefire violations along the line of contact. We condemn the use of heavy weaponry and indiscriminate shelling of civilian areas. We commend Ukraine's posture of restraint in the face of continued provocations and efforts at destabilization.

It is extremely worrying that staged events were created as a pretext for escalation. We have been witnessing an intensification of manipulation efforts to support such objectives and deplore such inflammatory rhetoric. There is no ground for allegations of a possible Ukrainian attack nor for Ukrainian attacks on Russian-speaking populations.

We reiterate our deep appreciation to the Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine (SMM) staff for their professionalism, impartiality and dedication to operate in an extremely challenging security environment, amidst the heightened international tensions and the increasing restrictions to the SMM's freedom of movement in the areas controlled by Russia. Their security and safety remain our first priority.

We reiterate our unwavering support to the sovereignty, territorial integrity, unity and independence of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders and call upon Russia to do likewise. We strongly condemn the clear violations of Ukrainian sovereignty and territorial integrity by Russia since February 2014, including the illegal annexation of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol to the Russian Federation, which we will not recognize, as well as the recognition of non-government controlled areas of Donetsk and Luhansk regions of Ukraine as independent entities. We stand by and will continue to support Ukraine and its people.

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

The candidate countries the Republic of North Macedonia¹, Montenegro¹ and Albania¹ and the EFTA countries Iceland and Norway, members of the European Economic Area, as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and Georgia align themselves with this statement.

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



1002nd Plenary Meeting

FSC Journal No. 1008, Agenda item 2(a)

**STATEMENT BY
THE DELEGATION OF CANADA**

Mr. Chairperson,

This statement is delivered under the topic raised by Ukraine.

The large-scale build-up of Russian combat forces continues at pace this past week along portions of the Russia-Ukraine State border and on illegally occupied Crimea. Elements of these forces have begun moving into areas of Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts not under the control of the Government of Ukraine. The numbers at this point are staggering, with reports of almost of 200,000 Russian soldiers now amassed within striking distance of the border with Ukraine. In addition to deploying a large proportion of Russia's conventional forces along the border with Ukraine, Russia has amassed over 70 warships in the Black Sea and Sea of Azov, including amphibious assault ships, clearly intended to intensify the threatening posture.

Remarkably, here at the OSCE Russia continues to peddle the fabrication that it has no intention of military action against Ukraine, but its actions say something different with the recognition of the so-called LNR/DNR and sending troops into Ukraine. In fact, what is evolving during this crisis, a crisis which is completely manufactured by the Russian Federation, is the realization that Russia is acting exactly in the manner in which we said they would.

Once again, we feel compelled to note that despite routinely professing to be staunch supporters of the Vienna Document, Russia refused at every possible step last week to demonstrate a desire for constructive dialogue, instead continuing to deploy a narrative of increasingly belligerent and ominous rhetoric, to obfuscate and to actively seek to stoke tensions, seek concessions through gun-barrel negotiation. This rhetoric has now been woven into the fabric of Russia's blatant disinformation campaign, intended to portray Ukraine as the aggressor State in this tragic conflict. These obvious, and sometimes fantastical attempts to build a pretext for conflict do not fool anyone.

The facts of the matter remain: Ukraine has done nothing to stoke the tensions, but rather has shown great restraint in the face of such threats. Ukraine is not the aggressor. Quite the contrary. There was no threat to the people of Donbas, Russia manufactured it. Russia created a fake threat, a fake refugee crisis, and a fake need to "intervene". All the while

building a very real, imminent threat to the safety and security of Ukraine and the overall stability of European security.

Amongst all this chaos, the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine (SMM) remains our eyes and ears in the region. However, restrictions to the SMM's freedom of movement continue unabated, and interference with its technical assets continues daily. The overwhelming majority of restrictions on freedom of movement take place in non-government controlled areas, particularly at border crossings, preventing the Mission from implementing its mandate. Now is the time to stop interfering with our monitors. Their work is vital.

Mr. Chairperson,

We commend Ukraine for its calm and diplomatically focused approach to this crisis.

We renew our call on Russia to cease these provocative actions and to immediately seek to de-escalate tensions. We sincerely hope that Russia chooses the path of dialogue and diplomacy and de-escalates this dangerous situation. It is not too late to make the right choice.

End this madness and withdraw immediately. There is still time for diplomacy to prevail, but that window is closing quickly. Russia can still choose a path of dialogue and diplomacy, before it is too late and even bigger mistakes are made.

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

Thank you.



1002nd Plenary Meeting

FSC Journal No. 1008, Agenda item 2(a)

**STATEMENT BY
THE DELEGATION OF LITHUANIA**

Mr. Chairperson,

Lithuania aligns itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union. Allow me to add a few remarks in my national capacity.

Lithuania strongly condemns the decision of the Russian Federation to recognize as independent two areas in Ukraine's Luhansk and Donetsk regions, which are held by formations that are armed, backed and led by Russia.

This decision constitutes a gross violation of principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, international law, the Helsinki Final Act and the Charter of Paris.

After annexing Crimea in 2014, Russia continues to undermine not only Ukraine's sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity but also its own commitments under the Budapest Memorandum.

By recognizing two areas in Ukraine's Luhansk and Donetsk regions and by sending its troops – now openly, because a number of Russian troops, so-called *ikhtamnety*, were already there – into the sovereign territory of Ukraine, Russia has also undermined the Minsk agreements, which it signed and which stipulated the process for restoring the government of Ukraine's control over these Ukrainian territories.

Russia's aggression against Ukraine, which has just entered its ninth year, and the decisions taken this Monday pose a threat not only to the European security architecture but also to global peace and security, as does Russia's disrespect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine, Georgia and the Republic of Moldova.

Recalling UN General Assembly resolution 68/262, entitled "Territorial integrity of Ukraine", we once again urge the Russian Federation to respect Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Russia must immediately cease its aggression against Ukraine, withdraw its troops from the occupied territories of Ukraine – both from the relevant parts of Donbas and from

the Crimean peninsula – and from the areas along the border with Ukraine and from Belarus, and stop its provocations and respective disinformation activities.

Russia must also return to diplomacy and demonstrate a genuine political will to settle the Russia-Ukraine conflict in a peaceful way, with full respect for OSCE principles and commitments.

Lithuania also wishes to point out that the recent escalation demonstrates the need to reinforce deterrence along NATO's entire eastern flank in response to Russia's aggressive actions in the region. And I wish to thank our NATO allies for their most recent decisions in this regard.

Russia's aggression against Ukraine, including the shameful decisions taken in the past days, must receive a strong response from the international community, including co-ordinated restrictive measures targeting specific economic sectors of the Russian Federation, as well persons and entities in positions of responsibility.

Russia bears sole responsibility for the deterioration in the security situation on the ground, for the current escalation, for its devastating results and for the possible consequences which we sincerely hope can still be avoided.

Lithuania strongly supports the free choice of the Ukrainian people to build their country on the basis of democratic values and Ukraine's European and Euro-Atlantic aspirations.

Lithuania will continue to make every effort to support Ukraine's statehood and independence and, together with our allies and partners, will provide all necessary assistance to Ukraine in this regard.

I thank you, Mr. Chairperson, and I kindly ask you to attach this statement to the journal of the day.



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

FSC.JOUR/1008
23 February 2022
Annex 8

ENGLISH
Original: RUSSIAN

1002nd Plenary Meeting
FSC Journal No. 1008, Agenda item 2(a)

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

Mr. Chairperson,

As one may conclude from the statements by a number of OSCE participating States, they consider themselves to be on the right side of history. The Russian historian Vasily Klyuchevsky once remarked: “History is not a teacher but an overseer: it does not teach anyone, it merely punishes those who do not know their lessons.” My esteemed colleagues have failed to learn their lessons. But there is still enough time for them to compel the Ukrainian Government to abandon its bloody and suicidal adventure in Donbas.

A lot of events have taken place in and around Ukraine over the past few weeks, and that is why today I should like to deliver a lengthy statement. My colleagues will have to arm themselves with patience.

The ongoing crisis in Ukraine is the result of the coup d'état of 21 February 2014, which was orchestrated, funded and organized from abroad. This coup in Kyiv led to the United States of America playing a decisive role in the governance of Ukraine – something that is unprecedented in world practice. US and other Western advisers completely subjugated the authorities of that country – from the central to the municipal authorities – not to mention State companies and corporations.

The forcible change of the Head of State was carried out without elections, in violation of the Constitution of Ukraine, and led to the country effectively being split into regions that recognized the new administration in Kyiv and those that opposed the putsch. This happened not least because when the putschists were installed in power, this was accompanied by large-scale violence, the flourishing of neo-Nazi movements, and persecution on the basis of national and linguistic characteristics. As a result, the confrontation between the new regime in Kyiv and the population of certain areas of Donetsk and Luhansk acquired the nature of a protracted armed conflict.

France, Germany and Poland acted as mediators between the authorities and the opposition and became guarantors of the agreements reached between them, but they did nothing to ensure that these were implemented when the opposition demonstratively repudiated them. The United States for its part did not even acknowledge that the agreement

had been violated by opposition members. For eight consecutive years, the same situation has been repeating itself: the Governments of France, Germany and the United States have been powerless when faced with the Ukrainian Government's categorical unwillingness to implement the Minsk agreements.

We are still astonished at the fact that the events in Ukraine, which is eight thousand kilometres away from North America, have been described by the US administration as "an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States". In 2012–2013, the US leadership effectively issued the Ukrainian authorities with an ultimatum to choose the "Western path". Subsequently the US Embassy in Kyiv provided financial support to the "Maidan" to the tune of around 1 million dollars a day.

The Russian delegation's message is quite clear, namely that international law prohibits the organization, advocacy, financing, incitement or toleration of activities aimed at destroying the constitutional order of another State. The complicity of the United States in the coup d'état in Kyiv in 2014 is a violation of international law and a gross flouting of Article 2(7) of the Charter of the United Nations, which proclaims the principle of non-intervention in the domestic affairs of sovereign States.

Mr. Chairperson,

Over the past few weeks, we have witnessed a large-scale orgy of hatred, information terrorism and hysterical propaganda engulfing the pan-European community. The idea of there being plans for a "Russian invasion" of Ukraine was hatched inside the US Department of State, and that is where it also died on 16 February. We can see that US intelligence got its facts mixed up. At one point, 100,000 troops had reportedly been amassed on the Russian-Ukrainian border, then it was 150,000, and a few minutes later the figure of 190,000 was being cited. We shall not prevent our esteemed colleagues from trying to make sense of these figures. If the European participating States are really interested in this information, we suggest that they ask the United States for satellite images; maybe the latter will agree to share them in exchange for additional payment.

As for the exercises on the territory of the Russian Federation, I should like to inform you that the cycle of military training activities in our country is an all-year one and covers all regions without exception. We shall conduct them in the places and at the times that we deem necessary for the purposes of ensuring our defence capability on our own national territory, as I would emphasize, and also in co-operation with our allies and like-minded countries. That is our sovereign right.

However, the statements made today by our esteemed colleagues raise the following questions.

If the United States and its allies claim that they are champions of the OSCE politico-military commitments, why do they shut their eyes to the Ukrainian Government's non-implementation of the Vienna Document 2011? Some 120,000 Ukrainian military personnel are amassed on the borders of the Luhansk People's Republic and the Donetsk People's Republic. Ukraine is concentrating heavy equipment along the line of contact, including thousands of armoured combat vehicles, hundreds of tanks, multiple-launch rocket systems and Tochka-U operational-tactical missile systems. Where are the Ukrainian

notifications disseminated via the OSCE Communications Network? Where are the pictures taken by the celebrated US satellites? We call on the Ukrainian delegation to respond – the same delegation that was busy manipulating the provisions of the Vienna Document 2011 during all of last week.

If the United States and its allies claim that they want peace in Ukraine, why do weapons and ammunition continue to be shipped to that conflict-torn country? History does not know of a single case in which peace was achieved by the pumping of weapons. Yet, foreign NLAW (Next Generation Light Anti-Tank Weapon), Javelin and Stinger systems have already turned up at the forward positions of the Ukrainian armed forces in Donbas. There are already, overall, more anti-tank guided missile and man-portable air defence systems in Ukraine than in some NATO countries. Western intelligence services are engaged in the recruitment of fighters to be deployed to Ukraine from South-Eastern Europe. The ongoing assimilation of Ukrainian territory by the NATO countries is leading to only one outcome, namely the creation of an anti-Russian “springboard” for NATO. However, the best option for the Ukrainian Government would be to refrain from joining the Alliance and to choose neutrality.

If the United States and its allies are calling for implementation of the Minsk agreements, why have they never addressed such an appeal to Ukraine at the OSCE? We have still not heard a response from the West to the assertions by the Ukrainian leadership to the effect that the Minsk agreements have become “obsolete” and are “unviable”, so that the Ukrainian Government has no intention of implementing them. Russia was never a party to the Minsk agreements, but as a co-mediator for a peaceful settlement it called on Ukraine, for seven years running, to fulfil its obligations under the Package of Measures, which was endorsed by United Nations Security Council resolution 2202. Now there is no longer anything to be called for in that respect. The Minsk agreements have been laid to rest by the Ukrainian Government’s inaction.

If the delegation of Ukraine talks about the need for a peaceful settlement of the conflict, why has the Ukrainian Government been waging a war against its own people for eight consecutive years? Why has an economic, social and transport blockade been in place against Donbas for eight years running – a blockade that amounts to genocide against one’s own people? Why do the European Union, the United States, Canada and the United Kingdom never voice their concern at the Forum for Security Co-operation about the prospects of ordinary people in certain areas of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions? Where are their usual mantras about the “civilian population”, human rights, “elderly people and children” and “women and girls”? Evidently, from the point of view of the “civilized democracies” and their acolytes, these people do not have to be protected.

Mr. Chairperson,

Last week, the situation in Donbas remained explosive. The Ukrainian armed forces were opening not random fire but targeted fire. Tanks were deployed. There were casualties among the civilian population. Incidents were recorded of shells landing on the territory of the Russian Federation, above all in the Rostov region. In these circumstances, the leadership of the Donetsk People’s Republic and the Luhansk People’s Republic ordered general mobilization. Our country confirmed its willingness to take in refugees, that is, elderly people, women and children. I should like to emphasize that we have already given shelter to

over 94,000 people. They headed not for Kyiv, where no one wants them, but to where they can feel safe and do not have to run the risk of physical extermination on account of their dissenting views.

In these circumstances, on 21 February, the President of the Russian Federation, Vladimir Putin, signed decrees recognizing the People's Republics of Luhansk and Donetsk. This step has elicited a high level of support both in Russian society and in the Republics themselves, which are inhabited by a Russian-speaking population that identifies with the Russian world. Yesterday, the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation endorsed that decision, and treaties of friendship and mutual assistance concluded with both Republics were ratified.

The decision was taken after giving consideration to a comprehensive assessment of the politico-military situation in the region, to the Ukrainian Government's refusal to implement the Minsk agreements through direct dialogue with the authorities in Donetsk and Luhansk, and also to Western States' encouragement of a solution by force to the internal Ukrainian conflict, which could have catastrophic humanitarian consequences.

This decision is in accordance with the freely expressed will of the residents of Donbas, who held a referendum on the matter on 11 May 2014, with the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations and the 1970 Declaration on Principles of International Law concerning Friendly Relations and Co-operation among States in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, with the CSCE Helsinki Final Act and other fundamental instruments.

We call on the authorities in Kyiv to halt hostilities immediately. Otherwise, as the President of Russia, Vladimir Putin, said, all responsibility for the possible continuation of the bloodshed will rest entirely and solely with the regime that rules in the territory of Ukraine.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson. I request 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/1008
23 February 2022
Annex 9

Original: ENGLISH

1002nd Plenary Meeting
FSC Journal No. 1008, Agenda item 2(a)

**STATEMENT BY
THE DELEGATION OF FRANCE (ALSO ON BEHALF OF GERMANY)**

France wishes to intervene, also on behalf of Germany, to make the following comments.

Mr. Chairperson,
Dear colleagues,

It must be clear, as it has been repeated by all the speakers today, that it is Russia that is violating international law and the Charter of the United Nations and not respecting the commitments made in the framework of the OSCE and the Minsk agreements.

The decision by President Putin to recognize the self-declared “peoples’ republics” in eastern Ukraine represents a fundamental breach of international law and a severe blow to all diplomatic efforts for the peaceful and political solution of the conflict. Several years of efforts in the Normandy format and the Trilateral Contact Group, under the auspices of the OSCE, are wilfully undone for no comprehensible reason. Russia massively damages its commitment to a diplomatic solution.

Recognition constitutes a further violation of Ukraine’s territorial integrity and sovereignty, which we condemn in the strongest possible terms. France and Germany remain unwavering by Ukraine’s side within its internationally recognized borders. We will respond to this breach of international law. To this end, we are co-ordinating with our partners.

Since 2014, Russia has claimed to be committed to the full implementation of the Minsk agreements and the related negotiation formats, the Normandy format and the Trilateral Contact Group mediated by the OSCE. Russia has also committed to the implementation of the Minsk agreements through United Nations Security Council resolution 2202 in its capacity as a permanent member of the Security Council. By its decision, Russia is breaking all these commitments.

We call on Russia to reverse its decision and to return to the path of diplomatic and political conflict resolution on the basis of the Minsk agreements.

We reiterate our urgent call on Russia to dismantle the military threat on Ukraine’s border. We unequivocally warn against further military escalation by Russia.

We recall that political advisers to the Heads of State or Government of the Normandy format met in January in Paris and in February in Berlin and reconfirmed in writing that the Minsk agreements are the basis of the work of the Normandy format and they discussed the importance for the Trilateral Contact Group, of which Russia is a member, to intensify their work with a view of swift progress in the implementation of the Minsk agreements. This position has been reiterated by the Russian President and his Foreign Minister repeatedly in exchanges with our leaders and Foreign Ministers during the last week.

As mediators in this conflict, we see no justification for Russia's unilateral step. In particular, Ukraine has undertaken concrete steps to accelerate the implementation of the Minsk agreements in the last weeks and underscored its commitment to a diplomatic solution time and again. Ukraine, unlike Russia, always followed the invitation of Germany and France to negotiate a sustainable and peaceful solution for the conflict in eastern Ukraine.

Mr. Chairperson, I would like to ask you to attach our joint statement to today's journal of the day.

Thank you.



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

FSC.JOUR/1008
23 February 2022
Annex 10

Original: ENGLISH

1002nd Plenary Meeting

FSC Journal No. 1008, Agenda item 2(b)

**STATEMENT BY
THE DELEGATION OF SWEDEN**

Mr. Chairperson,
Dear colleagues,

Sweden is responding to a statement made by the Russian Federation at last week's meeting of the FSC, in which the fact of Sweden conducting exercises and co-operating in the Baltic Sea region with, among others, NATO was questioned and seen to be a concerning and destabilizing factor.

Mr. Chairperson,

Sweden's security policy remains firm and unchanged. Our non-participation in military alliances serves us well and contributes to stability and security in northern Europe. We combine this with a defence policy that rests on two pillars: strengthened national capability and deepened international defence co-operation on a multi- and bilateral basis, especially with Finland. Challenges and threats to peace and security in Sweden and our region are safeguarded in solidarity and together with other nations.

Mr. Chairperson,

Sweden's non-participation in military alliances does not mean abstaining from co-operation. On the contrary, international co-operation is a key necessity for us. We are currently increasing joint training and the conducting of exercises with like-minded partners, in accordance with, for example, the Vienna Document, Chapter X, paragraph 144.4. We consider this to be a practice of central importance and find that it provides additional impetus for building up our national defence capability.

The right of participating States to choose their own security arrangements is enshrined in the European security order and is a fundamental part of the Charter of Paris and subsequent documents. We therefore reserve the right to take appropriate measures that are purely defensive in nature and calculated to serve the goal of stability and security in our region.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

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



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

FSC.JOUR/1008
23 February 2022
Annex 11

Original: ENGLISH

1002nd Plenary Meeting
FSC Journal No. 1008, Agenda item 2(b)

**STATEMENT BY
THE DELEGATION OF FINLAND**

Mr. Chairperson,
Distinguished colleagues,

Finland is responding to the statement made by the Russian delegation at last week's meeting of the FSC, in which Finland's participation in international exercises and co-operation with NATO was mentioned as a destabilizing factor.

Mr. Chairperson,

The current security situation is very serious and worrying. Russia has increased tensions with its military build-up around Ukraine. The security situation has worsened and become more unpredictable both around Ukraine and also more widely in Europe. The international rules-based system, international law and commonly agreed principles have been questioned, challenged and violated. This is a destabilizing factor.

Russia is seeking to strengthen its position and to weaken the unity of Western actors. It is aiming at a sphere-of-influence-based security regime in Europe. Additionally, the use of military force remains a central tool for Russia. This is a destabilizing factor.

Finland values the role of NATO in European security and sees the presence of NATO in the Baltic region as a stabilizing factor. The co-operation between NATO, Finland and Sweden is a key element of Finland's programme of international military co-operation, as are exercises conducted together with our partners. Finland has always shared information about its exercises in an open and transparent manner. Practical military co-operation and dialogue on the security situation in the Baltic Sea region improve Finland's ability to influence its security environment for the good and to increase predictability and stability in the region.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

I kindly request 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/1008
23 February 2022
Annex 12

Original: ENGLISH

1002nd Plenary Meeting

FSC Journal No. 1008, Agenda item 3(f)

**STATEMENT BY
THE DELEGATION OF ARMENIA**

Dear colleagues,

The delegation of Armenia took note of the request for technical experts issued by the FSC Co-ordinator for Assistance Projects on Small Arms and Light Weapons and Stockpiles of Conventional Ammunition dated 18 February 2022 (FSC.DEL/99/22). In this request, the FSC Chairperson's Co-ordinator invites OSCE participating States to provide technical experts to participate in an assessment visit to Azerbaijan in the framework of a request for practical assistance to enhance the capacities of national authorities of Azerbaijan in implementing explosive hazards risk reduction and response action.

The request distributed by the FSC Co-ordinator for Assistance Projects on SALW and SCA is nothing but a clear abuse of the FSC Chairmanship. It reaffirms our conviction that Azerbaijan cannot be a credible Chairmanship of the Organization's politico-military dimension or make a meaningful contribution to the implementation of OSCE commitments and principles.

At the 967th (FSC.DEL/45/21), 973rd (FSC.DEL/136/21) and 999th (FSC.DEL/50/22) meetings of the Forum for Security Co-operation, the delegation of Armenia expressed its position on the assistance project requested by Azerbaijan. Armenia's position was reaffirmed in a letter addressed to the FSC Chairmanship on 18 March 2021 (FSC.DEL/87/21). The position of Armenia remains unchanged. We view the project proposal of Azerbaijan, which is to be implemented in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict zone and in the occupied territories of Artsakh, as an abuse of the OSCE assistance mechanism for the sake of political manipulation and legitimization of the aggression and the results of the use of force against Artsakh.

Dear colleagues,

The delegation of Armenia has repeatedly pointed out the destructive nature of Azerbaijan's policy and the lack of integrity of its delegation. Now I wish to take this opportunity to quote some excerpts from the statements of the delegation of Azerbaijan.

On 27 January 2017, in response to the statement of the Chairperson of the Permanent Council on the extension of the mandate of the OSCE Office in Yerevan, the delegation of

Azerbaijan stated the following (PC.DEL/112/17): “As for the statement on intention of some participating States to assist Armenia with demining-related matters on bilateral basis, I wish to stress that it causes legitimate concern of the Azerbaijani side. We are not sure that this would be either helpful for a solution of the situation or contribute to stability in the region at all. ... any bilateral assistance to Armenia in this area would be conceived as violation of UN Security Council resolutions and unfriendly step against Azerbaijan.”

On 23 November 2017, in response to the report of the Secretary General on the “Armenia Co-operation Programme”, the delegation of Azerbaijan stated (PC.DEL/1612/17): “The Delegation of Azerbaijan is of the view that such cooperation programme should be transparent ... and should not be related to the conflict dealt with by the Minsk Conference. ... Azerbaijan’s support to Secretariat’s thematic programmes and structures as well as OSCE institutions working on this cooperation programme will depend on the above-mentioned points.”

On 9 September 2020, in response to the address of H.E. Mr. Niels Annen, Minister of State at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Germany, the delegation of Azerbaijan stated the following (FSC.DEL/171/20): “Azerbaijan is strongly against increasing or strengthening in any way military capabilities of the occupying state and thus, is not in position to support any assistance project requested by Armenia to this end.”

On 16 September 2020, at the opening session of Germany’s FSC Chairmanship, the delegation of Azerbaijan made the following statement (FSC.JOUR/960): “Let me reiterate that Azerbaijan is strongly against increasing or strengthening the military capabilities of this aggressor State in any way and is thus not in a position to support any assistance project requested to this end.”

I also wish to draw your attention to Section VI(B) of the OSCE Document on Stockpiles of Conventional Ammunition, which clearly defines the procedure for considering a request for assistance from a participating State. It provides that the FSC Chairperson is to initiate the OSCE response to the request, which may include an initial visit and pre-feasibility study, in close co-operation with the FSC Troika and the Chairmanship-in-Office.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate that any conflict-related activity by the OSCE can be carried out only on an equal and non-discriminatory basis, with the consent and participation of all parties to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. If appropriate actions are not taken to prevent such irresponsible behaviour on the part of the current FSC Chairmanship, which is turning the Forum for Security Co-operation into an instrument for advancing its national interests, it is the OSCE that will have to bear all the consequences of this situation.

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



1002nd Plenary Meeting

FSC Journal No. 1008, Agenda item 3(f)

**STATEMENT BY
THE DELEGATION OF AZERBAIJAN**

Mr. Chairperson,

We have on numerous occasions expressed our position and responded to Armenia's unsubstantiated allegations regarding Azerbaijan's request for practical assistance on enhancing the capacities of our national authorities in implementing explosive hazards risk reduction and response action. In regard with Armenia's intervention today, let me reiterate the following.

First, it must be reminded that Armenia is the sole country responsible for the currently acute situation in the liberated territories of Azerbaijan in regard with the mass contamination of these areas by landmines and unexploded ordnance. For three decades, during the occupation of these territories, Armenia has indiscriminately planted landmines therein and transformed them into one of the most contaminated areas in the world. Today, persistent mines planted by Armenia continue claiming the lives of civilians, create additional obstacles for the return of internally displaced persons, seriously impede wide-ranging rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts and undermine the overall process of post-conflict normalization and reconciliation.

Second, as to the issue of Azerbaijan's assistance request, this request is made in full compliance with our shared commitments in the field of small arms and light weapons (SALW) and stockpiles of conventional ammunition (SCA). It is being carried out fully in line with procedures specified in the OSCE Document on SCA. An expert visit to Azerbaijan is the next stage of this process.

Third, assistance is requested to implement the project on Azerbaijan's sovereign internationally recognized territories which were under Armenian occupation for nearly three decades and which are currently in dire need for post-conflict rehabilitation, of which humanitarian demining is an essential part. This is the bottom line and the main difference from the illegal activities which Armenia pursued in the formerly occupied territories of Azerbaijan. Thus, the least Armenia could do to somehow rectify its internationally wrongful acts is not to impede but facilitate the realization of this assistance project.

Lastly, Armenia keeps raising the issue of its own assistance request. On that account, we cannot help reminding the Forum of the pre-feasibility visit to Armenia announced in

December 2020, which Armenia herself chose to ignore, effectively refusing to move onto the next stage in implementing its requested assistance project. This, as well as Armenia's indefensible attitude towards Azerbaijan's assistance project, and overall, Armenia's continued opposition to our shared commitments in the field of SALW and SCA, vividly demonstrates that this country's apparent objective is to manipulate this issue within the Organization for promoting its own untenable purposes and obsolete conflict narratives.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.