

Chairmanship: Belarus

1008th PLENARY MEETING OF THE FORUM

1. Date: Wednesday, 4 May 2022 (in the Neuer Saal and via video teleconference)

Opened: 10 a.m.
Closed: 11 a.m.

2. Chairperson: Ambassador A. Dapkiunas

Prior to taking up the agenda, the Chairperson made some opening remarks (Annex 1).

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

Agenda item 1: GENERAL STATEMENTS

Statements on the FSC Chairmanship of Belarus and on the current security situation in the OSCE area: Russian Federation (Annex 2), Chairperson (Annex 3), United States of America (Annex 4), Ukraine (Annex 5), France-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, San Marino and Ukraine, in alignment) (Annex 6), Canada (Annex 7), United Kingdom (Annex 8), Switzerland (FSC.DEL/192/22 OSCE+) Belgium (Annex 9)

Agenda item 2: ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- (a) *Ongoing snap-check exercise to test military preparedness in Belarus*: Belarus
- (b) *Conference on humanitarian mine action and sustainable development goals (SDGs), held in Baku on 31 March and 1 April 2022*: Azerbaijan (FSC.DEL/199/22 OSCE+)

4. Next meeting:

Wednesday, 11 May 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/1014
4 May 2022
Annex 1

ENGLISH
Original: RUSSIAN

1008th Plenary Meeting
FSC Journal No. 1014, Point 2

STATEMENT BY THE CHAIRPERSON

Esteemed colleagues,

I welcome you to this regular meeting of the Forum for Security Co-operation (FSC).

I should like to draw your attention to the information on technical and organizational matters circulated yesterday in the letter with the details concerning today's meeting.

Usually the Chairperson announces this long list of pointers and recommendations verbally. To save the time of the distinguished participants, we shall not do this.

We believe that it would be more efficient and convenient for everyone to familiarize themselves with these procedural announcements in writing and in advance of our meeting.

We recommend that participants who are not yet familiar with the use of the Zoom platform and the rules for the Forum's work read this information particularly carefully.

Within the framework of its mandate, and in accordance with established practice and requests, the Chairmanship has decided to allow representatives of the United Nations, NATO and the Collective Security Treaty Organization secretariats to observe the Forum's proceedings.

Before turning to the main item on the agenda of our meeting, I should like to inform the distinguished delegations of the participating States about the way the Forum's work will be organized during the Belarusian Chairmanship.

Some of you may have already noticed some changes in the format of the Forum.

As you may surmise, the main reason for the innovations proposed by the Chairmanship is the tragic events of recent months and the extent to which they have radically affected the climate of co-operation between OSCE participating States.

In the next three months, there will not be the customary emphasis on the special role of the FSC Chairmanship. Today we will not have the usual inaugural meeting of the

Chairmanship. There will be no formal summation in three months' time. As you can see, we have decided to do away with the promotional trappings of the Chairmanship.

Belarus does not intend to propose any particular thematic priorities for promotion during its Chairmanship of the Forum. Our main concern as Chairmanship is to try to maintain the Forum as an important platform for the exchange of information and views and for politico-military dialogue between the OSCE participating States.

We have decided to forgo the traditional protocol events for Forum participants and the protocol niceties. In our view, maintaining the Forum's conventional protocol framework would be inappropriate in a situation where blood is being shed and people are being killed.

There are no Security Dialogues in the provisional Forum calendar. We have paid due attention to the call made at the previous meeting of the Forum for the return of the Security Dialogues to the FSC agenda. However, I think you will agree that Security Dialogues are a special form of discussion that requires a particular openness and goodwill on the part of Forum participants, not least because of the participation of external guests. To our great regret, such an atmosphere is absent today, both in the OSCE in general and in the Forum in particular.

If in the coming months there is a noticeable improvement in the tone of our collective interaction in the Forum, we would be prepared to consider revisiting this aspect of our work as well.

Another familiar tool in the work of the Forum that we have decided to suspend for the duration of the Belarusian Chairmanship is the use of co-ordinators for individual thematic areas.

This in a nutshell is what will not be part of the Forum's work in the coming trimester.

Now for a few words about what will be part of this work.

There will, if possible, be weekly meetings of the Forum where each delegation will have the right to make a general statement.

If all participating States agree, we hope to have the next annual meeting to review implementation of the Code of Conduct in June.

We will seek to agree on agenda proposals for the Annual Security Review Conference.

This is all we feel it is necessary to communicate about the format of our work for the coming three months.



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

FSC.JOUR/1014

4 May 2022

Annex 2

ENGLISH

Original: RUSSIAN

1008th Plenary Meeting

FSC Journal No. 1014, Agenda item 1

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

Mr. Chairperson,
Ambassador Dapkunas,

We warmly congratulate the delegation of Belarus on the start of its Chairmanship of the OSCE Forum for Security Co-operation (FSC), which falls during a difficult period in the work of our autonomous decision-making body. We share your message that we should consider returning the FSC to its politico-military roots, notably by working diligently to find answers to the current challenges to European security. We are convinced that our esteemed Belarusian friends will handle the Chairmanship's mission professionally and with dignity, continuing the Forum's negotiating traditions, which are based on the consensus principle, mutual respect and consideration of the interests of all participating States.

In any dialogue, and especially in a dialogue on politico-military security issues in Europe, a constructive attitude is essential. All we have heard so far at the OSCE is non-stop Russophobic hysteria and mantras that "business as usual" is now impossible. If we follow this logic, then in 1999, against the backdrop of the bloody NATO bombing of Yugoslavia, our country and like-minded countries could have slammed the door in the same way and blocked the meaningful work of the OSCE. And then there would have been no Istanbul Summit, the Heads of State or Government would not have adopted the Charter for European Security, and the Agreement on Adaptation of the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe, the modernized Vienna Document 1999 and many other fundamental documents and decisions that formed the vision of the OSCE area without dividing lines and zones with different levels of security would have been called into question. However, Russia is a responsible country that is capable of reaching agreement with others. We have always believed in the importance of developing collective principles in international affairs.

We see that our Western colleagues hold different views, preferring boycotts of undesirable States to international co-operation, and the erosion of international forums through subordination to the interests of the Western minority to the strengthening of such forums. The reason is that the United States of America and its satellites are trying to replace the architecture formed after the Second World War on the basis of the United Nations and international law with a "rules-based order". They provoke tragic crises, seeking to prevent the imminent collapse of the unipolar world order. To this end, in the spirit of the Jesuit logic

of Niccolò Machiavelli, they get involved in a shameful proxy war in Ukraine under the banner of “peacekeeping”. They use all available tools to suppress States that pursue an independent foreign policy. They will stoop to anything to satisfy their own geopolitical ambitions, endangering the energy and food security of entire regions of the world and causing enormous harm to their own citizens.

The crisis of pan-European security, which has also engulfed the OSCE, is no new phenomenon and is not Russia’s fault. First and foremost, it is a question of the long-standing destructive policy of the United States and its satellites, which, despite the promises made to the Soviet leadership (remember the subject of the conversation between Mikhail Gorbachev and James Baker in Moscow on 9 February 1990), have conducted five waves of NATO expansion, bringing their military infrastructure right up to our western borders. There are now plans to use the Alliance’s “eastern flank” (or is it already the eastern front?) for combat training of Ukrainian nationalists to kill not only Russians, but also anyone who disagrees with the current regime in Ukraine. Are the representatives of NATO countries still not tired of lying at the FSC that they represent a defensive bloc? Potential new members of the Alliance from among those States that are still neutral will also automatically find themselves on the NATO “front line” and will have to “keep the line” by following bloc discipline. The negative consequences for peace and stability in Europe, and for their own security, will be obvious.

The modern history of Europe shows that the NATO member countries also had no intention of fulfilling the commitments they made at the highest level within the OSCE not to strengthen their own security at the expense of the security of others. In 2009, they arrogantly rejected our initiative to sign the Treaty on European Security, and at the beginning of this year they consigned to the wastepaper basket the draft treaties with the United States and NATO on security guarantees. They refused to explain how they intend to implement in practice the commitment to the indivisibility of security in its complete wording, as enshrined in the Charter for European Security and the 2010 Astana Summit declaration. In a slap in the face to the “spirit of Torgau” and the joint history of having been allies in the Second World War, they timed the active phase of the Alliance’s large-scale “DEFENDER-Europe 2022” exercise to coincide with the 77th anniversary of victory over Nazism.

Simply put, the collective West has chosen a strategy of settling political scores with Russia. If our colleagues think that they will strengthen pan-European stability in this way, they are profoundly mistaken.

In the “Great Game” of the United States and NATO, Ukraine is seen exclusively as a tool for “containing” our country, and the Ukrainians themselves are used for this purpose only as cannon fodder. The collective West first provoked and then supported the unconstitutional coup d’état in February 2014. Instead of encouraging the Ukrainian Government to resolve the internal Ukrainian conflict by political means on the basis of the Minsk Package of Measures, for eight years Western countries pumped the Kyiv regime with weapons and trained and armed the Ukrainian army and Nazi-Banderite battalions, which were in fact illegal armed formations under Ukrainian law itself. Just as they do today, they did everything in their power to derail the negotiation process and the conclusion of political agreements. Achieving peace in Ukraine was never part of their plans. Judge for yourself.

Radio-Canada recently published evidence that the Canadian Government used its UNIFIER military training mission in Ukraine to train Nazi radicals, including fighters from the Azov nationalist battalion. Now, graduates of this, as we were assured at the FSC, “purely defensive” programme are using Ukrainian civilians as human shields, setting up firing positions in schools, kindergartens and hospitals, torturing people suspected of having a normal attitude towards Russia, and committing mass war crimes, leaving a trail of blood and scorched earth behind them in the truest sense. According to information from the Russian Ministry of Defence, in the town of Marhanets in the Dnipropetrovsk region, Ukrainian militants have mined the dam of the Nikolaev reservoir, which, if detonated, would leave the town itself and a number of neighbouring settlements with a population of over 45,000 in a possible flood zone. Russia’s Investigative Committee, in co-operation with the International Public Tribunal on Ukraine, in which representatives from more than 20 countries participate, is gathering information on the actions of the nationalists carried out with direct support from the West. All those guilty of crimes against humanity will be severely punished.

With the help of NATO countries, Ukraine is becoming a hub for foreign terrorists and mercenaries with combat experience in “hotspots”. More than 6,800 foreign mercenaries from 63 States have flocked to the country since the start of the Russian special military operation. The vast majority are citizens of Poland, the United States, Canada, Romania, the United Kingdom and Georgia. At the same time, the West does not cease pumping the Kyiv regime with weapons, violating all existing international agreements on the inadmissibility of supplying military goods to combat zones. Moreover, the United States and its satellites themselves admit that they are unable to trace the final delivery point of the sent weapons. Have the US Government and European capitals really forgotten how they first sponsored “moderate” fighters in Afghanistan, Syria and Iraq and then suffered from the terrorist attacks they perpetrated?

It has reached the point where the West is openly urging the Ukrainian Government to attack Russian territory with weapons obtained from NATO countries. We have taken note of the relevant statement by UK Parliamentary Under Secretary of State (Minister for the Armed Forces) James Heappey and firmly warn that directly provoking the Ukrainian Government to attack facilities on the territory of the Russian Federation will immediately lead to a proportional response. Russia is on round-the-clock alert to launch retaliatory strikes against decision-making centres, including those in Kyiv, which the Russian army has so far refrained from doing. Advisers in Ukrainian decision-making centres who are nationals of Western countries will not necessarily be a concern for Russia’s retaliation. We intend to continue the systematic destruction with high-precision weapons of Western military supplies for the Kyiv criminal regime, and of foreign mercenaries, both of which are military targets.

Mr. Chairperson,

The special military operation launched on 24 February is designed to prevent the genocide of the civilian population of Donbas, which the “civilized” Western world does not consider worthy of protection, and to eliminate threats to the national security of the Russian Federation, the Donetsk People’s Republic (DPR) and the Luhansk People’s Republic (LPR) emanating from Ukrainian territory. As a country that made a decisive contribution to the victory over Nazism in 1945, we remember well how the “brown plague” together with aggressive militarism enslaved Europe. Today, our continent is once again facing the resurgence of officially banned manifestations of fascism and neo-Nazism, as, along with

migrants from Ukraine, Bandera-inspired criminals with neo-Nazi views are fleeing from inevitable criminal prosecution. We will not allow a repeat of the scenarios of the 1940s. There is no doubt that the tasks of denazification and demilitarization of Ukraine will be accomplished.

We know that the successes of the Russian special military operation are a source of irritation in the West. The Russian Ministry of Defence has information that the United States is preparing provocations to smear the Russian Armed Forces and accuse them of using chemical, biological or tactical nuclear weapons. As Russian President Vladimir Putin said (I quote): “If someone intends to intervene in the ongoing events from the outside, and create strategic threats for Russia that are unacceptable to us, they should know that our retaliatory strikes will be lightning-fast. We have all the tools for this, things no one else can boast of having now. And we will not boast, we will use them if necessary. And I want everyone to know that” (end of quote).

The documents on the United States’ military biological activities on the territory of Ukraine obtained by the Russian Ministry of Defence during the special military operation substantiate our long-standing claims concerning the US Government’s compliance with the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC). Contrary to its international obligations, the United States has also retained provisions in its national legislation allowing work in the field of biological weapons, and the US Government accompanied the ratification of the 1925 Geneva Protocol with a number of reservations enabling the use of chemical, bacteriological and toxin weapons. At the same time, the United States stubbornly ignores our requests for exhaustive explanations of its military biological activities outside its national territory, notably in Ukraine. Excuses will not work here.

In this connection, we do not rule out the possibility of invoking the mechanisms of Articles V and VI of the BTWC, which require participating States to consult with one another in solving any problems that may arise in relation to the objective, or in the application, of the Convention, and also to co-operate in carrying out any investigations into alleged breaches of the BTWC. In addition, the Russian side is preparing to send an invitation to US officials and representatives of relevant companies to participate in a meeting of the Parliamentary Commission of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation to investigate the US Government’s military biological activities in Ukraine. There are plans to invite US Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs Victoria Nuland as one of the “witnesses”.

While the Ukrainian Government and the West are making plans for further anti-Russian provocations, which we have been persistently warning them against, our country is carrying out important humanitarian work in the liberated territories of Ukraine. Despite the difficulties created by the Ukrainian Government, more than 1 million people, including more than 196,000 children, have already been evacuated from dangerous regions to Russian territory without the involvement of the Ukrainian authorities.

Thanks to the initiative of Russian President Vladimir Putin, over 100 civilians were rescued from the Azovstal plant in Mariupol. In an interview with the UK television channel the BBC, they said that they had been forcibly detained for about two months by fighters from the Azov nationalist battalion. I emphasize again: by the same fighters who were trained by NATO countries for eight years. In this connection, we have noted the media reports about the detention of Canadian retired General Trevor Cadieu while trying to flee Azovstal. He

was once allegedly set to assume the post of Commander of the Canadian Army. It is possible that there are other foreign instructors and mercenaries still at the plant who are cravenly hiding behind the backs of Ukrainian civilians, including women and children. Well, the Ukrainian delegation, as it usually does, can thank its international partners for such “assistance”.

During the special military operation by the armed forces of the Russian Federation and units of the DPR and LPR, significant territories of the DPR and LPR, the entire Kherson region and parts of the Kharkiv, Zaporizhzhia and Nikolaev regions have been liberated. Peaceful life is being restored there, and benefits for pensioners, doctors, teachers and other public sector workers continue to be allocated. By order of President Putin, veterans of the Great Patriotic War living in the aforementioned regions are to receive one-off payments on the 77th anniversary of the victory. Against this background, we note with regret that the Ukrainian Government has submitted to the Verkhovna Rada (Ukrainian Parliament) a draft law on withdrawal from the agreement on perpetuating the memory of the courage and heroism of the peoples of the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States in that common war.

Mr. Chairperson,

To sum up, we should like to warn the Kyiv regime and its handlers against further destabilizing the situation in the field of European security. In the current circumstances, we should remain keenly aware of the absolute unacceptability of irresponsible escalation of rhetoric and actions.

All that has been said today only confirms the relevance of the Forum as a unique permanent pan-European platform for ensuring stability on the continent. We sincerely wish the tight-knit team of the Chairmanship every success. We confirm our readiness in principle for close and productive co-operation with our esteemed Belarusian friends in strengthening the foundations of our autonomous OSCE decision-making body. Any possible attempts by a number of participating States to block its meaningful work will remain on their conscience.

We thank our Azerbaijani friends, who have completed their Chairmanship functions, for their professional leadership of the FSC during a difficult period. We welcome Belgium as the incoming member of the FSC Troika and express our gratitude to Austria as the outgoing member.

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

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.



**Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
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4 May 2022
Annex 3

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1008th Plenary Meeting
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**STATEMENT BY
THE CHAIRPERSON**

Your request is taken note of.

I should like, if I may, to make a small digression.

This is the automatic phrase you routinely hear from the Chairperson at Forum and Permanent Council meetings after every request to attach the text of a statement to the journal of the day.

In order to save the time of the distinguished members of the Forum and to organize the proceedings in accordance with common sense, the Chairperson intends to forgo repeating this phrase several times.

Let me explain the logic behind our decision. Under paragraph IV.1(B)7 of the Rules of Procedure of the OSCE, the texts of statements made at a meeting may be annexed to the journal of the meeting if so requested by a Representative at the meeting and agreed by the Chairperson.

As the Chairperson of the Forum sees no reason why delegations of participating States should be denied this request, the Chairperson will give general consent for all statements made at meetings of the Forum to be automatically attached to the journal of the day at the request of delegations.

Of course, this request can be complied with only if the written statement is submitted to the Meetings Assistance Unit in good time.



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

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Annex 4

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1008th Plenary Meeting
FSC Journal No. 1014, Agenda item 1

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

The United States will not engage with the Belarusian Chairmanship of the Forum for Security Co-operation (FSC). The basis of our stance should be clear: Belarus allowed Russia to use its territory to launch an unjustified and barbaric invasion of Ukraine, rendering Belarus complicit in Russia's aggression.

As an accomplice in Russia's aggression, we do not believe Belarus should preside over this Forum which is mandated to enhance security co-operation, "including through the further encouragement of responsible and co-operative norms of behaviour on politico-military aspects of security." Belarus has not "enhance[d]" security co-operation; rather, Belarus contributed to the deterioration of European security by abetting Russia's blatant aggression, clearly violating every norm of responsible and co-operative behaviour. We value this Forum too much to see it denigrated. We cannot witness the human toll of that aggression and then pretend that Belarus can serve as a neutral arbiter, or even a "technical" Chairmanship.

Do not mistake our silence for consent or acquiescence to the disinformation Russia will no doubt continue to expound as it continues to abuse this Forum for propaganda purposes. We all know Russia's playbook. Let the record show that the Russian delegation's every word lacks any credibility.

This is a dark day for the FSC, as these are dark days for Ukraine and for Europe, but this Forum will survive and thrive, as will Ukraine, and one day we will be able to return to our core work of enhancing security co-operation. We trust that the forthcoming Belgian Chairmanship will undertake that work.

Please attach this statement to the journal of the day.



1008th Plenary Meeting
FSC Journal No. 1014, Agenda item 1

**STATEMENT BY
THE DELEGATION OF UKRAINE**

Esteemed colleagues,

I have the honour to take the floor on behalf of the delegation of Ukraine to make clear the position of Ukraine on the issue of the Belarusian Chairmanship of the OSCE Forum for Security Co-operation (FSC).

In his statement at the closing session under the FSC Chairmanship of Azerbaijan, the Ambassador of Belarus said the following: “It is important to take the Forum back to its ‘roots’ – to find solutions to the issues that three decades ago led to the creation of this unique platform to discuss on an equal and mutually respectful basis topical matters related to European security.”

The FSC was created 30 years ago to improve the security situation in the OSCE area by focusing on strengthening predictability, military transparency, stability, risk reduction, and incident prevention. The fundamental discussions aimed at achieving these objectives remain important. However, we do not consider it possible to embrace the fact that such discussions will be chaired and their agenda determined by a participating State that supports an ongoing full-scale war in the OSCE area and is on the side of the aggressor in that war.

The Republic of Belarus provided the Russian Federation with territory for the ground invasion of Ukraine. At least three regions of Ukraine – those of Kyiv, Zhytomyr and Chernihiv – were attacked from the territory of Belarus. Belarus provided Russia with airfields for airstrikes and launching grounds for missile attacks, including ones targeting the civilian population. Such acts unequivocally fall under the definition of acts of aggression provided by United Nations General Assembly resolution 3314 (XXIX) in its annex “Definition of Aggression”.

We deem it unacceptable, and even damaging to the letter and spirit of existing commitments in the politico-military dimension, that a State that is actively involved in the Russian Federation’s flagrant violation of OSCE principles and commitments should chair the OSCE Forum for Security Co-operation.

We regret that Belarus did not waive its turn to chair the FSC. The very fact of its Chairmanship is an affront to the principles on which the OSCE is based.

This being the case, I would like to underline that such a state of affairs makes it impossible for the delegation of Ukraine to continue its usual participation and involvement in FSC meetings under the Chairmanship of Belarus.

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

Thank you, colleagues.



1008th Plenary Meeting

FSC Journal No. 1014, Agenda item 1

**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, further to the announcements by Ukraine and the United States of America, let me explain the position of the European Union and its Member States as well as of the participating States aligning themselves with this statement.

The Forum for Security Co-operation (FSC) was established almost 30 years ago with a clear mandate in the politico-military dimension of the OSCE to discuss the security needs and concerns of all participating States, to co-operate towards peace in our area through increased military transparency and predictability and building mutual trust.

Now, for more than two months, the brutal full-scale war of aggression launched by Russia against its sovereign, democratic and peaceful neighbouring State, Ukraine, has been ravaging our continent. The images coming from this war continue to shock the whole world.

Russia bears full responsibility for its barbaric acts, resulting in unspeakable human suffering and tragedies, the loss of life, massive displacement and the destruction of many Ukrainian cities. Targeting and killing innocent civilians, redrawing borders in blood, attempting to subjugate the will of a free people, these unacceptable actions grossly violate international law, the principles of the UN Charter and the OSCE as well as the basic concepts of morality, of right and wrong. Let us be clear: we will spare no efforts to hold to account all those who are responsible for war crimes or crimes against humanity.

Today, as Belarus, in accordance with the OSCE Rules of Procedure, is taking over the role of FSC Chairmanship, mutual trust no longer exists. Military transparency and predictability have been significantly undermined as a result of the actions undertaken by Russia, with the complicit support of Belarus.

The European Union and its Member States see Russia's aggression as a direct threat to European and global security and stability. It is a paradigm-shifting event that will have knock-on effects across many regions in the world. We are sure that this unprovoked and unjustified aggression against Ukraine will become a strategic failure. For this reason, we will continue to support Ukrainians in their heroic defence of their homeland and in their

right to choose their own future and destiny. We will also continue to impose severe costs on the invaders.

We deplore the complicity of Belarus in enabling and supporting the Russian military aggression by providing its territory and logistical infrastructure for the attack on its neighbour. On 16 February 2022, eight days before the start of the invasion, in the joint meeting of the Permanent Council and the Forum for Security Co-operation, Belarus, with regard to the exercise “Union Resolve 2022”, stated the following: “The exercise is not directed against anyone at all. It does not pose any threat to neighbouring countries or to regional security as a whole”. These hollow words are still resounding in our memories. We know what happened afterwards. Belarus became a co-aggressor. Tanks started rolling down from the territory of Belarus in the direction of Kyiv, including through the Chernobyl exclusion zone. Missiles were launched from the territory of Belarus against Ukraine. Atrocities committed by the invaders in Bucha, Irpin and other places in the Kyiv Oblast followed suit.

The OSCE has a unique role to play in conflict situations. The Organization’s main task is to preserve and support peace, stability and security in Europe. Respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms are also key to the OSCE’s comprehensive security concept. The link between internal repression and external aggression is undeniable. We cannot but wholeheartedly agree with United Nations Secretary General António Guterres who said last week in Kyiv that war is an absurdity in the twenty-first century. The Russian armed forces keep reminding us of this every single day.

We demand that Russia immediately and unconditionally cease its military actions and withdraw all its troops and equipment from the entire territory of Ukraine, including the illegally annexed Crimean peninsula. We also reiterate our call on Belarus to stop enabling the Russian aggression and to abide by its international obligations.

Under the current circumstances we cannot have business as usual, including in this Forum. The role of Belarus in the facilitation of the Russian aggression has heavily undermined the legitimacy and credibility of the Belarusian FSC Chairmanship. As a clear sign of our protest we intend to keep our engagement in the FSC in the current trimester to a bare minimum.

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

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

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



1008th Plenary Meeting
FSC Journal No. 1014, Agenda item 1

**STATEMENT BY
THE DELEGATION OF CANADA**

Colleagues,

As we begin another semester here in the Forum for Security Co-operation (FSC), we must recognize that the dark shadow of war has been cast over Europe and we are presented with unprecedented challenges to our work here in the FSC.

In an act of unprecedented disregard for our shared OSCE principles and commitments and for international law, this spring semester is dominated by a blatant act of aggression by the Russian Federation against its sovereign neighbour. An act of aggression which was planned and initiated under the very noses of this Forum, with the Russian Federation and Belarus making a mockery of our shared confidence- and security-building measures, with bold, but blatantly false statements in this very room. Belarus remains complicit in this conflict having allowed not only the staging of Russian combat forces but also the conduct of combat operations from its territory. In this Forum we heard: “Russia had no intention to invade Ukraine, there will be no war, the ‘west is hysterical’, and troops along the border are on exercise or are returning to their home bases”. All of this was simply an outright lie, an attempt at deception, and a gross abuse of this Forum to do it. These actions of Russia (enabled by Belarus) remain completely incompatible with our shared OSCE principles and a direct affront to the international rules-based order.

We must not lose sight of the fact that Russia’s act of aggression has manifested itself as a full-scale conventional conflict with the indiscriminate targeting of civilians and civilian infrastructure, resulting in over four million refugees and 12 million internally displaced people. In a shocking display of violence, not seen on the European continent in over 75 years, the Russian Federation has conducted its war of aggression, a war built on a pretext of lies, with little to no regard for the lives of innocent Ukrainians or the protection of civilian property. As the war enters its third month this truth has become painfully evident to the entire world. The past several weeks have seen the discovery of the abhorrent abuses committed in Bucha and in other cities and towns across Ukraine where Russia’s occupation has left a trail of atrocities, indiscriminate violence, and death.

Amongst all the lies and propaganda, one undeniable truth remains incontrovertible: Ukraine and its people have done nothing to provoke or instigate this conflict. 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”.

We must remain resolved to speak truth in the face of blatant propaganda. We must remain steadfast in our support for the people of Ukraine, who in the face of this unimaginable tragedy, are demonstrating tremendous courage, standing their ground and fighting for their homes.

For our part we will continue to stand up for the truth and hold Russia accountable for its prosecution of this unjust war. We remain resolute in our call for Russia to stop this war of aggression, withdraw from the territory of Ukraine and return its soldiers to Russia, where they belong. Russia started this war and Russia can stop it.

We must remain stewards of the principles of open and honest dialogue which remain fundamental to the value of the FSC. We will not allow the FSC to be an unfettered tool for the spreading of Russian propaganda. Russia’s need to overwhelm its own population with lies, to present them with an alternate reality, and to control the information they receive is despicable and clearly shows the Kremlin’s fear that its own people would find out the truth. But, they will. The truth will prevail and we will endeavour to ensure that the truth remains at the centrepiece of our engagement in the Forum.

Thank you.



1008th Plenary Meeting

FSC Journal No. 1014, Agenda item 1

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

Mr. Chairperson,

During the last trimester we recognized that we had entered a critical and dangerous time for Euro-Atlantic security. We, along with the rest of the world, watched in horror as Russia conducted its unprovoked, premeditated and barbaric attack on Ukraine.

Over the past weeks we have continued to see an out-manoeuvred and frustrated Russian military unleash horrendous amounts of violence and have watched in dismay at the ongoing reports of men, women and children killed and mutilated. This is a great moral stain upon the Russian military, and one which will never be forgotten. Ukraine has taken up the fight to defend their homeland, as my Prime Minister said yesterday in his address to the Ukrainian Parliament “Ukrainians [have] taught the world that the brute force of an aggressor counts for nothing against the moral force of a people determined to be free”.

Mr. Chairperson, the Russian Government’s Plan A, to conquer an independent and democratic State by force, has failed. Putin is now scrabbling for something he can sell as a victory to this people – something he can say was worth the lives of so many thousands of Russian soldiers. The weeks ahead will be critical as Russia continues to seek a “land grab” by force.

Russia’s actions are also an attack on the Euro-Atlantic security architecture that was designed to increase security and stability in the region and, through trust, help prevent such appalling acts.

For their part, our Russian colleagues have “weaponized” the OSCE confidence- and security-building mechanisms which underpin this Organization. They have lied to this Forum, and indeed continue to lie to this Forum as we have seen again today. They have shattered the trust and belief that all of us in this room seek a secure and stable region – that we all work in good faith for a mutual goal.

It is clear that normal business cannot resume whilst Putin wages his horrific and barbaric war of choice on our Ukrainian friends. In this regard we condemn in the strongest possible words, Belarus’ ongoing support for Russia’s war of aggression on Ukraine,

including permitting the use of its territory by Russia to launch the barbaric attacks against the Ukrainian people.

Our primary focus must remain to work together – for however long it takes – to ensure that the sovereignty, territorial integrity, and the independence of Ukraine is restored. The United Kingdom stands with and will continue to support the Ukrainian people in their fight for their homeland, including through the ongoing provision of military assistance.

Against all of this, we must do our utmost to ensure the integrity of this Forum, such that it remains able to fulfil its mandate. In this regard we trust it will continue to be stewarded in a professional and proper manner.

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



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

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Annex 9

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STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF BELGIUM

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

Belgium fully aligns itself with the statement by the European Union. However, please allow me to add some remarks in my national capacity and as the new member of the Troika of the Forum for Security Co-operation (FSC).

On 24 February this year, an unjustified and unprovoked war was launched against Ukraine by the Russian Government with the complicity of the Belarusian Government, confronting the international community, including this Organization and this Forum, with a crisis in the OSCE's area of responsibility on a scale unparalleled since the Organization's establishment. All the tools of multilateral diplomacy to prevent this crisis, including those of the OSCE and the FSC, have been disregarded or even actively obstructed. The values of international law and commitments undertaken within the OSCE are being trampled underfoot at an enormous humanitarian cost that is growing daily.

We must be resolute in our response to the present tragic situation. Belgium is convinced that discussions among OSCE politico-military experts are of great importance, especially in times of war. In our view, the FSC has unquestionable added value but functions only if all States show the political will to use the Forum properly. This is the message we shall continue to advocate, also within the FSC Troika.

I should like to thank our Azerbaijani colleagues for their skilful leadership of the Forum over the past four months. We also take note of the fact that Belarus will chair the Forum for Security Co-operation in a businesslike manner; we hope that it will carry out this task in accordance with our shared principles.

Finally, I should like to assure the Polish Chairmanship of our Organization of Belgium's full support, especially in these difficult times.

In conclusion, I wish to stress that Belgium sees its role as the forthcoming holder of the FSC Chairmanship as an opportunity to defend the values and principles of the OSCE and the commitments made by all within it.

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

Thank you.