



FSC Chairmanship: Portugal

**LETTER FROM THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE
FORUM FOR SECURITY CO-OPERATION TO THE FEDERAL
MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF GERMANY, CHAIRPERSON
OF THE TWENTY-THIRD MEETING OF THE MINISTERIAL
COUNCIL OF THE OSCE**

As the Chairperson of the Forum for Security Co-operation (FSC), it is a pleasure for me to inform you about the activities of the Forum in 2016.

In preparing this letter, I have consulted with the previous 2016 FSC Chairmanships of the Netherlands and Poland. During 2016, the Chairmanships worked in close co-operation with each other to ensure continuity and efficiency in the implementation of the Forum's annual work programme.

Even though the situation in and around Ukraine remained the dominant topic of the discussions in the FSC, several initiatives put forward by participating States led to the adoption of five decisions which were designed to support the implementation of existing commitments and their further development. In particular, the FSC adopted a decision to extend the assistance mechanisms outlined in the Documents on Small Arms and Light Weapons and Stockpiles of Conventional Ammunition to the OSCE Partners for Co-operation on a voluntary basis. Furthermore, the participating States decided to allow the publication on the OSCE website of certain information they exchange on anti-personnel landmines, conventional arms transfers and small arms and light weapons.

The strategic discussions during the Security Dialogues emphasized the FSC's importance as a platform for addressing and discussing security issues. Specifically, an active dialogue took place on matters related to topical European security issues, including, *inter alia*, arms control and CSBMs, the Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security, small arms and light weapons and stockpiles of conventional ammunition, UN Security Council resolutions 1540 (2004) and 1325 (2000) and subregional military and defence co-operation. All three FSC 2016 Chairmanships actively stimulated discussions by organizing a total of nineteen Security Dialogues.

It is worth noting that the issue of arms control and confidence- and security-building measures (CSBMs) was accorded particular importance during the tenure of the three FSC Chairmanships, which was highlighted through a number of activities in 2016.

On the basis of paragraph 15.7 of the Vienna Document 2011, the Netherlands organized a High-Level Military Doctrine Seminar (on 16 and 17 February). This event

provided a much needed opportunity to facilitate military-to-military contacts and to examine recent developments in participating States' military doctrines. The Netherlands also co-chaired a joint meeting of the FSC and the Permanent Council on "European security".

Poland dedicated a Security Dialogue to the topic of "Conventional arms control and CSBMs". Furthermore, under the Chairmanship of Poland, the FSC contributed to the Annual Security Review Conference (from 28 to 30 June). The discussions during Working Session II: "Conventional arms control and confidence- and security-building measures: problems and prospects" highlighted that the FSC can play a key role in promoting co-operative responses to current and future challenges.

Under the Chairmanship of Portugal, the FSC devoted a Security Dialogue to the issue of "Changes in the role of the military forces – practical and military doctrinal implications". Moreover, a joint meeting of the FSC and the Permanent Council was dedicated to "Revisiting the 1996 OSCE Framework for Arms Control". The meeting showed that arms control, including disarmament and confidence- and security-building, remains integral to the OSCE's comprehensive and co-operative concept of security.

Beyond the regular discussions on arms control and on modernizing and updating the Vienna Document, several participating States published a number of food-for-thought papers and proposals for Vienna Document Plus decisions as provided for in paragraph 151 of the Vienna Document 2011. The FSC Chairperson's Co-ordinator for the Vienna Document organized during 2016 several informal meetings to discuss certain aspects of updating the Vienna Document and on the reissuance of the Vienna Document. A special meeting of the FSC was held in accordance with paragraph 152 of the Vienna Document 2011, although it did not result in the reissuance of the Vienna Document due to a lack of consensus.

In conclusion, the FSC has continued in 2016 to provide an important platform for participating States to discuss matters related to arms control and CSBMs in general and the Vienna Document in particular. The large number of proposals for Vienna Document Plus decisions indicates that many participating States see a potential and necessity for further developing the Vienna Document and for continuing sustained efforts in that regard.