

**81st (SPECIAL) JOINT MEETING
OF THE PERMANENT COUNCIL AND
THE FORUM FOR SECURITY CO-OPERATION**

1. Date: Wednesday, 14 April 2021 (via video teleconference)

Opened: 9 a.m.
Closed: 11 a.m.

2. Chairperson: Ambassador U. Funered (PC) (Sweden)
Mr. A. Hovhannisyan (FSC) (Armenia)

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

Agenda item 1: OPENING REMARKS OF THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE
PERMANENT COUNCIL AND THE CHAIRPERSON OF
THE FORUM FOR SECURITY CO-OPERATION

Chairperson (PC), Chairperson (FSC)

Agenda item 2: ACTIVATION OF PARAGRAPH 16.3 OF THE VIENNA
DOCUMENT 2011 ON CONFIDENCE- AND
SECURITY-BUILDING MEASURES, CHAPTER III
“MECHANISM FOR CONSULTATION AND
CO-OPERATION AS REGARDS UNUSUAL MILITARY
ACTIVITIES”, PARAGRAPH 16.3 “MEETING OF ALL
PARTICIPATING STATES REGARDING UNUSUAL
MILITARY ACTIVITIES”

Chairperson (FSC), Ukraine (Annex 1), United Kingdom (Annex 2), United States of America (Annex 3), Canada (Annex 4), Portugal-European Union (with the candidate countries Albania, Montenegro and North Macedonia; the European Free Trade Association countries Iceland and Liechtenstein, members of the European Economic Area; as well as Andorra, Georgia, Moldova, San Marino and Ukraine, in alignment) (Annex 5), France (also on behalf of Germany) (Annex 6), Switzerland (FSC-PC.DEL/31/21 OSCE+), Norway (FSC-PC.DEL/29/21/Rev.1), Estonia (Annex 7), Lithuania (Annex 8),

Turkey (Annex 9), Czech Republic (Annex 10), Poland (FSC-PC.DEL/35/21 OSCE+), Italy (Annex 11), Georgia (Annex 12), Bulgaria (Annex 13), Russian Federation (Annex 14), Latvia (Annex 15), Chairperson (PC)

Agenda item 3: ANY OTHER BUSINESS

None

4. Next meeting:

To be announced



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

FSC-PC.JOUR/68
14 April 2021
Annex 1

Original: ENGLISH

81st Joint Meeting of the PC and the FSC
FSC-PC Journal No. 68, Agenda item 2

STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF UKRAINE

Dear Co-Chairpersons,

We are grateful for your efforts in promptly and efficiently responding to our concerns shared by many participating States regarding the ongoing unusual military activity of the Russian Federation. I wish to lend my words of gratitude to the Chairmanships of the Permanent Council and the Forum for Security Co-operation for convening this meeting at the request of Ukraine.

Allow me also to take a moment to congratulate Armenia with assuming the responsible task of chairing the Forum in the second trimester of this year and wish the Armenian side every success on this path.

Let me briefly outline the steps undertaken by Ukraine in applying relevant measures foreseen by the Vienna Document 2011 to dispel concerns over unusual large-scale military activity of the Russian Federation.

On 7 April, by sending a notification format to the Russian Federation and all participating States, Ukraine activated the “Mechanism for consultation and co-operation as regards unusual military activities” under Chapter III. Our concern is based on the large-scale military build-up of Russia in close vicinity to our borders and in temporarily occupied Crimea amid the Russian-led escalation of violence in Donbas.

The response provided by the Russian Federation on 9 April was clearly unsatisfactory. It did not provide sufficient information on the parameters of the activity to dispel the concerns of Ukraine and was very formal in substance. Therefore, we proceeded with the next step stipulated by Chapter III and requested a meeting with the Russian Federation and other interested participating States.

Consultations were held on 10 April engaging 39 participating States. The Russian Federation opted not to participate in them. Upon the results of the consultations, it was made abundantly clear that the majority of participating States take very seriously Russia’s recent military activities along the border with Ukraine and in temporarily occupied Crimea. We are grateful for the detailed report prepared by the Swedish OSCE Chairmanship, distributed among all participating States shortly after the meeting.

Given the reluctance of the Russian side to engage in a meaningful dialogue and dispel the concerns of Ukraine and many other participating States, we approached the OSCE Chairmanship to initiate this joint meeting.

The decision of Ukraine to activate the mechanisms under Chapter III was based on a thorough assessment of security situation near our border with the Russian Federation and in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine, including the territorial waters of Ukraine.

According to our information, the command of the armed forces of the Russian Federation is increasing its presence near the State border of Ukraine by moving certain military commands and units from the Western, Southern and Central Military Districts, airborne troops, and the Northern Fleet. This activity is accompanied by intensive military training for offensive operations.

In addition to 28 battalion tactical groups already deployed on a permanent basis near the border with Ukraine, the Russian leadership plans to move even more forces to this area from their normal peacetime locations. Preparations to deploy 12 battalion-sized tactical groups; 4 mission-tailored artillery units; 2 special operation detachments; 1 missile air defence unit; 1 electronic warfare tactical group; 8 short-range ballistic missile systems “Iskander”; up to 80 main battle tanks; over 500 armoured combat vehicles; and more than 100 artillery systems, including 22 multiple-launch rocket platforms, are underway.

Russia continues to flood temporarily occupied Crimea with even more weapons, military equipment and troops, stationed there without host nation consent. Russia has increased its military footprint on the peninsula by additionally deploying 13 battalion-sized tactical groups, 5 mission-tailored artillery units, including 6 short-range ballistic missile systems “Iskander”, one special operation detachment, one electronic warfare tactical group, as well as a brigade-sized helicopter tactical unit.

Following these activities Russia increased its military strength in Crimea up to 42,000 troops integrated in a joint striking formation capable to employ the entire range of kinetic systems for offensive combat operations. It has also reinforced the air component on the peninsula with additional bombers, assault, fighter and close aviation support. Major airfields on the peninsula (Hvardiyske and Belbek) are currently suitable for operating strategic long-range bombers.

Apart from that, we can observe an increase in the intensity of offensive combat training exercises in temporarily occupied Crimea and adjacent territorial waters. New forms and methods of the use of force are introduced. In particular, they include training of massive air strikes involving more than 100 aircraft and about 60 helicopters being in the air at the same time, simultaneously using naval, air and coastal missile carriers, and simulating air strikes on surface ships. New modernized types of missile, torpedo and electronic weapons are being actively tested in the Black Sea.

Ukraine considers the aforementioned activities, concentration of forces and means by Russia as militarily significant. Taking into account these alarming developments, we cannot rule out a possibility that the Russian forces in Crimea and/or in the vicinity of our border could resort to serious military provocations in the course of this year.

Ukraine has a bitter experience of 2014 when Russia failed to clarify the real reasons for stationing of its armed forces alongside the borders with Ukraine or refused to participate in relevant consultations and official meetings on the matter. The reason of such behaviour was made clear in the course of events which followed. Russia prepared the ground for occupation of Ukrainian Crimea and parts of Donbas by unleashing armed aggression against Ukraine.

We concur with many views and assessments expressed by the delegations during the consultations held on 10 April. Our dialogue yielded important questions addressed to the Russian Federation which when fully answered may reduce tensions and dispel some of our concerns regarding its military activities. We urge the Russian side to carefully consider the report upon the outcomes of the consultations, diligently prepared by the Swedish Chairmanship, and come up with clear and comprehensive answers to the questions contained therein in the shortest term.

We believe it would be expedient to compile all the recommendations expressed by the delegations in the course of this meeting as well as questions raised at the consultations on 10 April and address them to the Russian Federation. We invite the Swedish Chairmanship to give due consideration to this proposal.

If the Russian Federation is genuinely interested in rebuilding transparency, predictability and confidence and ensuring politico-military stability in the OSCE area and does not nurture intentions of expanding its armed aggression against Ukraine, it will promptly give its responses and take into account the recommendations expressed today.

Having said that, we are, however, convinced that the most efficient way to dispel our concerns remains the immediate withdrawal by Russia of its troops from the border with Ukraine and from the temporarily occupied Crimean peninsula, abandonment of its belligerent rhetoric, threats of the use of force and disinformation campaign against Ukraine, fulfilment in good faith of security provisions of the Minsk agreements and its commitments under the Vienna Document.

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

I thank you.



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

FSC-PC.JOUR/68
14 April 2021
Annex 2

Original: ENGLISH

81st Joint Meeting of the PC and the FSC
FSC-PC Journal No. 68, Agenda item 2

STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF THE UNITED KINGDOM

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson, I would like to start by thanking you and your team for your efforts to convene this important and urgent meeting today.

The United Kingdom shares Ukraine's significant concerns about the recent increased Russian military activity on Ukraine's border and in illegally annexed Crimea. We fully support Ukraine's use of this Vienna Document mechanism to seek an explanation from Russia for this military activity and request greater transparency in order to de-escalate the situation.

Mr. Chairperson,

The Vienna Document is a key confidence- and security-building measure, through which we build transparency and reduce risk. Russia's decision not to participate in the meeting convened on Saturday under paragraph 16.2 of the Vienna Document, and indeed, Russia's stated intention not to engage at all in any Chapter III meetings only deepens our concerns. We recognize a member of the Russian delegation is present today and hope they will show a change of heart and now engage constructively here today after hearing the contributions of other participating States.

The F10 message issued on 7 April was a creditable attempt by Ukraine to achieve greater transparency about Russia's military build-up, and to reduce the risk of further escalation. It was a legitimate request that Russia was obliged, under the terms of the Vienna Document, to answer in a satisfactory manner. Unfortunately, Russia chose not to.

At the meeting on Saturday, in which 39 participating States took part, Ukraine and a number of other States raised specific concerns and called on Russia to answer specific questions. These are contained in the Chairperson's report, CBM/SE/21/0004/F14/O, and remain unanswered. We urge Russia to answer these questions here and now today, and so uphold the OSCE principles and commitments that it freely signed up to and act responsibly to de-escalate the situation.

We would highlight that it is Ukraine's right, as a participating State, to issue a Chapter III request for explanation in relation to any unusual and unscheduled military activities outside normal peacetime locations and which are militarily significant. Russia's

refusal to engage with the process to date because it “sees no reason for the implementation of procedures” completely undermines the purpose for which the risk reduction measure was designed.

Mr. Chairperson,

The United Kingdom strongly supports the political resolve demonstrated by Ukraine to resist ongoing Russian aggression, resolve the conflict through political means, and de-escalate the conflict. Ukraine has acted responsibly and with great restraint in the face of the renewed provocations by the Russian-backed armed formations which have unfortunately resulted in yet further Ukrainian armed forces casualties. Russia’s increased rhetoric and disinformation also risks further escalation and is utterly irresponsible. We call on Russia to cease these reckless actions, and instead focus on implementing its commitments under the Minsk agreements and the Normandy Summit held in Paris in December 2019.

The United Kingdom is unwavering in its support for 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.

It is Russia’s actions that continue to undermine European security including through its disregard for fundamental OSCE principles, including respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of other States, and the use of threat of force. We therefore call again on Russia to return to full compliance with OSCE principles, to fulfil its commitments, and to take urgent de-escalatory measures.

I would like to finish by reiterating that the door remains open for Russia to use the Vienna Document, to provide reassurance about its intentions near Ukraine’s borders and in illegally annexed Crimea, here and now today. We call on Russia to meet the above recommendations and engage in risk reduction measures without further delay. Russia’s continued failure to do so poses a serious threat to the security of the whole OSCE area.

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



**Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
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FSC-PC.JOUR/68

14 April 2021

Annex 3

Original: ENGLISH

81st Joint Meeting of the PC and the FSC

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STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

The United States joins other participating States in expressing our continued and considerable concern over Russia's military activities near Ukraine's border and in Russian-occupied Crimea. These provocations only threaten to further destabilize an already tense and fragile security situation. We regret that Russia refused to participate in this joint meeting of the Forum for Security Co-operation and the Permanent Council and a previous meeting with Ukraine, and that Moscow has not clarified the situation on the ground regarding the location, dates, and purpose of the military activity and information on the forces involved, as requested by Ukraine under Vienna Document, Chapter III, "Risk reduction". The provision of such information would go a great way in helping to reduce tensions in eastern Ukraine, tensions for which Russia is solely responsible for escalating.

Russia's refusal to provide sufficient information about unusual military activities near its border with Ukraine and in Russian-occupied Crimea is inconsistent with the letter and spirit of the Vienna Document, which was adopted by all 57 participating States, including Russia. We urge Russia to remember its commitments to this organization and to the principles we are all expected to adhere, including those outlined in the Vienna Document.

After having fomented and fuelled seven years of conflict in eastern Ukraine, Russia now has the opportunity to do the right thing. Now is the moment for Russia to clearly articulate the nature of its military activities near Ukraine's border and dispel the concerns of its neighbours and OSCE participating States in accordance with the Vienna Document. All of the available evidence suggests this is not a routine military exercise.

We also find dubious any suggestions that these activities may be related to Russia's "ZAPAD" exercise later this year, given the timing, location, and composition of Russian forces involved. We specifically note Russia indicated in its F30 notification that "ZAPAD" would take place from 10 to 16 September in training areas of the Western Military District. Its connection to current activity is implausible, even when considering potential changes to exercise plans, especially without an updated notification.

Ukraine is certainly right to be concerned about these activities. In both 2008 and 2014, Russia massed forces in a similar manner before it launched military operations against Georgia and then Ukraine. For months now, Russia has been using its Permanent Council

statements to outline a false narrative asserting a large-scale Ukrainian military operation was evident. Such escalation on the part of Ukraine has not been seen.

Russia's unilateral military activities only serve to further destabilize an already volatile situation and threaten to unravel the fragile ceasefire on the ground in eastern Ukraine. Its absence from today's joint meeting does nothing to assuage the concerns of this body. Rather, it serves as another worrisome signal and suggests that Russia aims to flaunt its commitments and continue on this provocative path, with real risks to regional security.

Based on information available in the Vienna Document and open sources, Russia has declared a significant number of forces based at facilities in the region: more than 17,000 on Ukrainian territory in Crimea, for example. A field activity involving even a portion of these forces would exceed the 9,000-troop threshold for pre-notification of a military activity under paragraph 40.1.1, at least by the time the troops involved commenced the activities. If those forces were augmented by troops and equipment from outside the region, which we assess to be the case, the numbers obviously grow.

According to information obtained from available sources, Russia has more troops stationed on the Ukrainian border now than at any time since 2014. Russia has moved 15,000 to 25,000 troops to Crimea or closer to the Ukrainian borders. This number includes infantry, tank battalions, helicopters, and air defence assets. These forces add to Russia's already significantly increased combat capabilities in Crimea and along its internationally recognized border with Ukraine. In Crimea, we assess Russia has an estimated 31,500 troops and has deployed advanced air defence systems, such as the S-400, fighter aircraft and coastal defence cruise missiles. Along the internationally recognized border with Ukraine, Russia has increased its force posture considerably since 2015, stationing tens of thousands of troops, reactivating units, refurbishing bases, and deploying more capable ground, air and air defence equipment.

The United States notes the paragraph 16 mechanism is not confined to instances of "significant military activity that is required to be reported under the Vienna Document 2011," as Russia appears to suggest in its recent note verbale. Under paragraph 16, participating States will consult and co-operate with each other about "any unusual and unscheduled activities of military forces outside their normal peacetime locations," including activities that are below Vienna Document thresholds.

Large military activity on the border of – or indeed in the territory of – a neighbour without prior notification, as is the case here, is destabilizing, particularly given the context and history. It raises questions about intentions.

To our knowledge Ukraine has taken no step that could be viewed as provoking such a response.

We again call on Russia to explain the size, composition, and purpose of this activity.

The Vienna Document and the Stabilizing Measures for Localized Crisis Situations (DOC.FSC/2/96) outline a number of potential measures that can form the basis of recommendations to stabilize the current situation. Among such measures, we recommend that Russia provide a briefing detailing their activities of concern, following the parameters of

the Ukrainian F10 request; and that Russia host a voluntary visit to dispel concerns about its military activities, as is encouraged under paragraph 18 of the Vienna Document 2011.



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Original: ENGLISH

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STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF CANADA

Mr. Chairperson,

Thank you for convening this important special joint session. We appreciate the efforts of you and your team in the face of an urgent timeline and very challenging circumstances.

Canada is deeply concerned about Russia's recent destabilizing actions and significant military build-up of forces and equipment along Ukraine's border and on the illegally occupied Crimean peninsula. The large-scale movements of troops, tanks, and other artillery units, without prior notification, represent threatening and destabilizing activities.

Canada is likewise deeply concerned by the continued attempts by the Russian Federation to spread a false narrative regarding Ukrainian intentions and "provocations" Russia's rhetoric regarding its reasons for possible offensive actions in Donbas is particularly troubling and seriously undermines efforts to de-escalate the current crisis. We remain fully supportive of Ukraine's efforts to counter this disinformation campaign and call on the Russian Federation to cease its aggressive and escalatory rhetoric.

We commend Ukraine's efforts to use the risk reduction mechanisms afforded by the Vienna Document in an effort to de-escalate this situation and seek clarity on not only the scope and scale of these movements by Russia, but also their strategic intent.

The Vienna Document remains the bedrock of the OSCE's toolbox of confidence- and security-building measures and we call on Russia to return to good-faith participation in all aspects of the Vienna Document 2011, in line with the document's intent of restoring confidence, building trust and reducing military risks.

We believe that this is an appropriate use of the Vienna Document: de-escalation of tense situations is exactly what the confidence- and security-building measures toolbox was designed for. However, in order for it to be effective, all parties must want it to work.

Russia's response to Ukraine's reasonable F10 request for information on "unusual military activity" made no attempt to satisfactorily address the legitimate concerns expressed by a neighbouring participating State, nor to allay any perception of malicious intent.

Additionally, Russia's refusal to attend the special meeting called by the Chairperson-in-Office on the 10 April, was another clear signal of a lack of desire by Russia to de-escalate this situation.

We are encouraged to see a delegate from the Russian Federation participating in today's joint meeting of the Forum for Security Co-operation and Permanent Council. We would welcome Russia's effort at transparency regarding its large-scale build-up of troops, tanks and artillery along the border with Ukraine and on the illegally occupied Crimean peninsula. We would suggest that Russia give due consideration to how the intent of its actions might be perceived by its neighbours when considering how to best employ the transparency mechanisms provided within the Vienna Document with the overall intent of risk reduction. We remain concerned regarding the timeliness of this effort by Russia, and question its genuine commitment to our shared confidence- and security-building measures, noting that Russia takes every opportunity to avail itself of the mechanisms provided by the Vienna Document, routinely participating in visits and conducting inspections in other participating States, whilst taking a minimalist, almost obstructionist approach to the intended reciprocal nature of its provisions.

We remain deeply disappointed that the Russian Federation continues to attempt to argue the applicability of the Vienna Document, rather than choosing to avail itself of our shared transparency and risk reduction mechanisms and address these expressed concerns. The lack of engagement leaves the distinct impression that Russia is not interested in transparency and the risk reduction it provides but rather seeks to avoid all efforts to reduce lower tensions with its neighbours.

We call on Russia to fully meet its obligations under the Vienna Document 2011 in both letter and spirit, and offer a reasonable and thoughtful response regarding its recent large-scale military activity with focus on its broader intent. The Vienna Document provides these tools. Without such engagement, we are left with a number of troubling questions: Why is Russia choosing to not engage in the recent activities convened under the Vienna Document Chapter III? Why is it not taking the opportunity to convey to neighbouring participating States an openness and transparency which would help allay concerns? Why does it continue its aggressive rhetoric if it has no malicious intent?

We renew our call on Russia to act in good faith and to put forth an honest effort to address the concerns of its neighbours, concerns that have been echoed by a vast majority of OSCE participating States.

For Canada's part, Prime Minister Trudeau and Foreign Minister Garneau recently spoke with President Zelensky and Foreign Minister Kuleba about the situation, an expression of the weight and seriousness Canada places on it, and we will continue to monitor the situation closely.

We are concerned about reports of increased levels of violence in Donbas, including the recent deaths of six Ukrainian servicemen due to sniper fire, and we will continue to work with Allies and partners to emphasize the importance of pursuing diplomatic avenues to resolve the conflict in eastern Ukraine. We strongly encourage Russia to uphold the ceasefire agreement and to de-escalate the increasing violence in Donbas.

Canada remains unwavering in our support for Ukraine's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders including its navigational rights within its territorial waters, and beyond. We commend Ukraine for its posture of restraint.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.



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Original: ENGLISH

81st Joint Meeting of the PC and the FSC
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STATEMENT BY THE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

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

The European Union and its Member States welcome the convening of this joint meeting of the Forum for Security Co-operation and the Permanent Council by the Swedish and Armenian Chairmanships at the request of the delegation of Ukraine. Such discussion on the security concerns about the ongoing unusual military activities of the Russian Federation in the areas adjacent to the State border of Ukraine and in the illegally annexed Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol is indeed urgently needed.

We are following very closely and with severe concern the worsening of the security situation in eastern Ukraine and Russian troop movements towards and at its border with Ukraine and in the illegally annexed Crimean peninsula. We urge the Russian Federation to take the necessary steps to de-escalate the situation and to engage in a meaningful dialogue and constructive consultations. We have all signed up to the Vienna Document precisely to reduce military risks and misperceptions and to improve understanding of threat perceptions and build trust among participating States. It constitutes a key element of our common security. We, therefore, fully supported Ukraine's request to activate the consultation mechanism as foreseen in paragraph 16 under the risk reduction Chapter of the Vienna Document.

We took note of the explanations provided on Friday by the Russian Federation, which can hardly be considered satisfactory since they do not provide relevant information to explain the activities in question and dispel the concerns.

The refusal of the Russian Federation to engage in a meaningful dialogue in the meeting last Saturday was regrettable and does not contribute to efforts to de-escalate. We, therefore, call Russia to engage in good faith on the basis of its OSCE politico-military commitments.

The concern is about unusual military activities of the Russian troops at the border and on the illegally annexed Crimean peninsula which take place at a time when the level of violence in eastern Ukraine has also increased. The OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine notes in its recent weekly report an almost threefold increase of ceasefire violations

for the second consecutive week. The rising numbers of ceasefire violations and casualties and fatalities among the civilian population and the Ukrainian military personnel at well-known hotspots are highly worrying. When transparency and mutual confidence are in short supply, any provocation or the spread of disinformation can have dire consequences.

Ukrainians on both sides of the line of contact have seen enough of human suffering. The Normandy Four Summit in Paris and the recommitment to the ceasefire in July of last year have offered hope for progress on the way to a peaceful solution. The European Union welcomes the important steps Ukraine, under President Zelensky's leadership, has taken in this regard. We regret that an extraordinary meeting of the Trilateral Contact Group on 7 April did not result in the renewal of the ceasefire commitments of 22 July 2020 by all sides since the Russian Federation refused to engage constructively. We call upon the sides to refrain from actions and rhetoric that lead to heightened tensions and to step up instead their efforts in implementing the Minsk agreements. In particular, we urge the Russian Federation to provide full transparency on its military activities which are a matter of strong concern for other participating States.

We recall our principled position that the full implementation of the Minsk agreements is the only way forward. We strongly support the efforts of both the Normandy Format and the Trilateral Contact Group to find a peaceful resolution of the conflict, in full respect of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders. The work of the OSCE's Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine is of crucial importance and we call on Russia to ensure that the Mission has full freedom of movement within Ukraine, which has never been the case due to restrictions imposed by the Russian-backed armed formations, including the targeting and intensive jamming of its unmanned aerial vehicles and denial of access or passage at their checkpoints.

In conclusion, we reiterate our unwavering support for the sovereignty, territorial integrity, unity and independence of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders, and call upon Russia to do likewise. We, together with our partners, will continue to closely monitor the situation and react decisively to any further violations of these principles.

Recommendations

As regards measures for clarifying the situation as well as halting activities that give rise to concern, the European Union and its Member States recommend to use all relevant provisions under the Vienna Document and other confidence- and security-building measures to the fullest, and in particular:

- To the Russian Federation to take steps to de-escalate the situation and to engage in a meaningful dialogue and constructive consultations;
- To the Russian Federation to provide, in accordance with its commitments under the Vienna Document, full transparency on its military activities, in particular on the fundamental questions concerning the size and structure of permanent stationed troops in the respective areas and of additional transferred troops involved in the combat training and the duration of their deployment;

- To the Russian Federation to voluntarily host a visit to dispel concerns about its military activities, in accordance with the provisions under paragraph 18 of the Vienna Document 2011;
- To continue discussing this particular issue at the Permanent Council and/or Forum for Security Co-operation;
- That participating States involved continue to regularly brief the Forum for Security Co-operation, in particular on military activities in border areas.

Madam Chairperson, I kindly request that these recommendations and our statement today be attached to the journal of the day.

The candidate countries the Republic of North Macedonia¹, Montenegro¹ and Albania¹, the European Free Trade Association countries Iceland and Liechtenstein, members of the European Economic Area, as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, 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.



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FSC-PC.JOUR/68
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ENGLISH
Original: FRENCH

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

Madam Chairperson,

While aligning itself with the statement made by the European Union on behalf of the Member States, France wishes to take the floor, also on behalf of Germany, and highlight the following points.

As indicated in their statements issued on 3 and 10 April, both France and Germany are deeply concerned about the increasing number of ceasefire violations and the recent deterioration of the security situation in eastern Ukraine. While the parties' renewed commitment to the ceasefire last July had allowed for an unprecedented decrease in violence since the signing of the Minsk agreements, we have observed in recent weeks a diminished respect for the ceasefire and regret in particular the increase in the number of victims among the Ukrainian armed forces and civilians since the beginning of 2021. We are continuing to closely monitor the situation, in which the risk of escalation should not be underestimated.

For several days, we and other partners have been observing large-scale Russian troop movements on the border with Ukraine. Such activities near the border are a cause for concern. In response to these movements of Russian forces, Ukraine has taken the decision to trigger the mechanism for consultation provided for under paragraph 16.1 of the OSCE Vienna Document on Confidence- and Security-Building Measures. France and Germany support the Ukrainian Government's triggering of this mechanism, which is specifically designed to address this type of concern. The explanations provided by the Russian Federation cannot be considered satisfactory as they do not provide relevant information to explain the activities in question and to dispel concerns. We also regret that the Russian Federation refused to participate in the bilateral meeting convened by Ukraine, as provided for by the mechanism for consultation under the Vienna Document. We therefore call on Russia to reconsider its approach and to commit itself in good faith to respecting its politico-military commitments to the OSCE.

Our vigilance is accompanied by an active commitment on our part. France and Germany are in regular contact with the parties, notably in the Normandy format, with a view to easing tensions, as was the case at the meeting of diplomatic advisers held on 29 March. During their meeting with Vladimir Putin, the President of the Republic and the German

Chancellor called on their Russian counterpart to commit fully to effective compliance with the ceasefire.

Compliance with the ceasefire remains our top priority and is an essential condition for the implementation of the Minsk agreements. The measures to stabilize the situation in the conflict zone, decided upon at the Paris Summit, remain imperfect for the time being.

While we welcome the renewal of the mandate of the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine (SMM), we call for an end to the restrictions on its freedom of movement, which remain a major obstacle to any substantial progress on the ground, so that the SMM can carry out its mission in accordance with its mandate. We reiterate the need to ensure free, safe, secure and unhindered access for the SMM monitors and SMM equipment to the entire territory of Ukraine. France and Germany are fully committed to reminding Russia of its responsibility in this respect. We also reiterate our full support for the OSCE Border Observer Mission.

France and Germany have, for their part, engaged in substantive discussions with the parties with a view to achieving a just and lasting settlement of the conflict. The objective is to achieve a set of measures that takes into account the concerns of each party, in order to facilitate the implementation of the Minsk agreements in their entirety.

We expect Russia to contribute to these discussions in a constructive and responsible manner, both in the Normandy format and in the Trilateral Contact Group. We also call on it to make greater use of the influence it has over the *de facto* representatives of the areas not controlled by the Ukrainian Government.

In conclusion, France and Germany reaffirm their support for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders. Our two countries are continuing their efforts in the Normandy format to ensure the full implementation of the Minsk agreements and negotiations are being held regularly to this end. Rest assured that the commitment of France and Germany will not waver.

Mr. Chairperson, I kindly ask you to attach our joint statement and these recommendations to the journal of the day.

Recommendations

In addition to the recommendations made by the European Union, France and Germany recommend that the Russian Federation:

- Provide, in accordance with its commitments under the Vienna Document and in response to the procedure triggered in paragraph 16:
 - Full transparency regarding its military activities in the areas in question;
 - In particular, on the size and structure of its troops permanently deployed in the areas concerned and of the additional troops recently deployed, even if what is involved are routine training measures, as well as on the duration, location(s) and temporary or permanent nature of this deployment;

- Allow, as part of the mutual confidence-building process:
 - Russian-Government-accredited defence attachés from our participating States to visit certain parts of the exercises/participating formations;
 - Representatives of the international press to follow the exercise as well;
 - Or, if necessary, the organization of a Distinguished Visitors' Day.

France and Germany recommend that all participating States explore in good faith the applicability of the measures contained in the OSCE document on Stabilizing Measures for Localized Crisis Situations.

Madam Chairperson, I kindly ask you to attach our joint statement and these recommendations to the journal of the day.



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Original: ENGLISH

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STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF ESTONIA

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

Estonia fully aligns with the statement of the European Union.

In addition, let me also raise our concerns about the developments under discussion today which are by no means ordinary.

Estonia expresses serious concerns about the ongoing unusual military activities of the Russian Federation in the areas adjacent to the State border of Ukraine and in the illegally annexed Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol.

We fully support Ukraine and urge the Russian Federation to take steps to de-escalate the situation and to engage in a meaningful dialogue and constructive consultations.

Explanations by the Russian Federation so far have been unsatisfactory.

We also regret Russia's non-involvement at the consultations on Saturday and at today's meeting (so far).

This is a regrettable moment to miss a true opportunity for building confidence.

This is contrary to the letter and spirit of the Vienna Document and all confidence-building here in the OSCE in Vienna and in the OSCE area.

It is also contrary to Russia's many assurances.

We call on Russia to fulfil its confidence- and security-building commitments as well as the recommendations made by the participating States.

I would ask my statement to be included in the journal of the day.

Thank you.



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Original: ENGLISH

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STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF LITHUANIA

Mr. Chairperson,

First of all let me wish Armenia a successful Chairmanship of the Forum for Security Co-operation (FSC).

Lithuania fully aligns itself with the statement of the European Union. However, I would like to add a few remarks in my national capacity.

Lithuania is greatly concerned with the ongoing build-up and concentration of Russian military forces on Ukraine's borders and in the illegally annexed Crimea. The experience of 2014–2015 serves as a reminder of how quickly such a situation might escalate into a large-scale military confrontation. Understandably, this makes us extremely worried.

Lithuania, therefore, strongly supports Ukraine's activation of the mechanism for consultation and co-operation concerning unusual military activities, in accordance with Chapter III, paragraph 16 of the Vienna Document. With this, Ukraine demonstrates its readiness to engage in consultations aimed at clarifying possible misunderstandings, decreasing unpredictability and reducing military risks.

Russia's response to Ukraine's request for an explanation for the unusual military activity was unsatisfactory. Russia's refusal to participate in the meeting last Saturday (10 April) is inconsistent with the requirements of the Vienna Document. This is yet another example of the selective implementation of existing confidence- and security-building measures agreed by all participating States to address such situations.

We have noticed that Russia has significantly stepped up its propaganda and disinformation campaign against Ukraine. Russia has also refused to renew its ceasefire commitments, falsely accusing Ukraine of both preparing a military offensive and shelling civilian settlements in the Russian-occupied part of Ukraine. Lithuania condemns such provocative rhetoric by the Russian Federation.

We commend Ukraine for its steadfast commitment to a peaceful resolution of the Russian-Ukrainian conflict, as well as the restraint shown by the Ukrainian armed forces. At

the same time, we acknowledge the right of Ukraine to defend itself from armed aggression by the Russian Federation, which has already lasted for more than seven years.

Lithuania fully aligns itself with the recommendations to be put forward in the second part of this meeting on behalf of the European Union Member States. In particular, we expect the Russian Federation to provide a detailed explanation of its military activities on Ukraine's borders and in the illegally annexed Crimea, as requested by Ukraine in accordance with the risk reduction measures foreseen in Chapter III, paragraph 16 of the Vienna Document.

Lithuania takes this opportunity to ask the Chairpersons of the Permanent Council and the FSC to keep this issue at the top of their agenda.

Mr. Chairperson, I kindly ask this statement to be attached to the journal of the day.

Thank you.



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Original: ENGLISH

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STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF TURKEY

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

I would like to share our views on this matter that were already expressed in the meeting organized in accordance with the Vienna Document, Chapter III, paragraph 16, on 10 April 2021.

First of all, Turkey's strong support for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine, including Crimea, is well known.

Secondly, we would like to reiterate our sincere call for the full implementation of the Minsk agreements. The ceasefire must be fully complied.

Thirdly, the recent escalation is a source of concern for our region and beyond.

In this critical juncture, wise and careful steps to de-escalate the tensions should be taken.

Dialogue channels should continue to work and diplomacy must prevail. There is an utmost need to act with prudence.

We continue our talks with both sides at all levels in a transparent manner.

The current crisis should be resolved acting in restraint, with diplomatic means and on the basis of Ukraine's territorial integrity, including Crimea, as well as its independence, sovereignty and political unity, in line with OSCE principles and commitments and with international law.

The Black Sea region should continue to be an area of peace, serenity and co-operation.

Turkey's precise and sensitive implementation of the Montreux Convention fully in accordance with its letter and spirit will continue.

Mr. Chairperson,

Last but not least, let me repeat our stance on Crimea, which has always been clear, consistent and principled.

Turkey does not recognize the illegal annexation of Crimea and is concerned about the situation on the peninsula.

We expect the OSCE and its institutions to remain seized of the situation and their access to the peninsula to be ensured.

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

Thank you.



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Annex 10

Original: ENGLISH

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STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF THE CZECH REPUBLIC

Mr. Chairperson,

The Czech Republic aligns itself with the statement made by the European Union and I would like to add a few remarks in my national capacity aiming specifically at the need of Vienna Document 2011 modernization.

Dialogue is the OSCE's main working method. If any of the participating States refuses to engage in a constructive dialogue held in the framework of a previously agreed, exact, step-by-step consultative mechanism then such a mechanism cannot work and such behaviour has to be considered as a manifestation of disregard for the basic principles of this Organization. The decision of the Russian Federation not to participate in the bilateral consultations convened on 10 April 2021 under Chapter III, paragraph 16 of the Vienna Document 2011 is an example of such behaviour – undermining trust and confidence in the OSCE area.

At each FSC Security Dialogue meeting dedicated to the Vienna Document 2011 and its modernization, we have heard calls from representatives of the Russian Federation to focus on better implementation of the current version of the document. Now, when the Russian Federation has had the opportunity to demonstrate the proper implementation of Chapter III, “Risk Reduction” of the Vienna Document 2011 in order to dispel concerns raised by Ukraine and other participating States, it failed to do so.

The current situation with the implementation of Chapter III, paragraph 16 of the Vienna Document 2011 can be seen as a strong signal for modernization of the document. The joint comprehensive proposal in this regard presented during the Czech FSC Chairmanship on 23 October 2019 (and currently supported by 34 participating States) contains also several specific proposals for this situation, for example the establishment of a special inspection and so on.

The Czech Republic calls on all participating States to proceed with the modernization of the Vienna Document 2011 and to follow the specific provisions of the document in the situations for which it is intended.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.



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ENGLISH
Original: ITALIAN

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**STATEMENT BY
THE DELEGATION OF ITALY**

Mr. Chairperson,

Italy aligns itself with the statement made on behalf of the European Union. I should now like to add a few remarks in a national capacity.

We continue to follow with apprehension the reports of developments on the ground near the Russian-Ukrainian border and in Crimea, which are understandably causing great concern among some participating States.

The issue in question today is not the assessment of the legitimacy of these military manoeuvres on the national territory of a participating State, as has also been claimed by our esteemed Russian colleagues on social media, but the purpose of such manoeuvres and, above all, the “threat perception” they have generated in other participating States.

In the not too distant past, in order to prevent doubts and misunderstandings from triggering crises among participating States, we agreed together here at the OSCE on a complex and comprehensive package of transparency and confidence-building measures that, today, are proving increasingly necessary and relevant. These tools are available to all – I repeat, to all – and allow, through dialogue, for the clarification of issues that could undermine regional stability.

We therefore congratulate Ukraine for resuming dialogue on its “risk perception” by activating the mechanism provided for in paragraph 16 of the Vienna Document; at the same time, we strongly urge the Russian Federation to respond to the questions raised during the consultations held last Monday, pursuant to paragraph 16.2 of the Vienna Document, and to accept the recommendations that will be made during this joint meeting of the Forum for Security Co-operation and the Permanent Council.

To conclude, Mr. Chairperson, allow me to remind you how useful it would be today to take advantage also of the operational tools provided for by the Treaty on Open Skies.

Mr. Chairperson, I request that this statement be included in the journal of the meeting.

Thank you.



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Original: ENGLISH

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STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF GEORGIA

Co-Chairpersons,

I thank you for convening this joint meeting today and thank the Ukrainian delegation for the initiative. Taking this opportunity, let me wish Armenia a successful Chairmanship of the Forum for Security Co-operation.

Georgia aligns itself with the statement delivered by the European Union. In addition, allow me to make the following remarks in my national capacity.

Time and again we have expressed our deep concern over the large-scale military build-up of Russian forces in proximity to Ukraine's State border and in illegally-occupied Crimea.

Russia's refusal to provide substantial information under the Vienna Document and rejection to pro-actively participate in the meetings requested by Ukraine, on 10 April and today, only adds to these concerns. The aggressive rhetoric of the Russian officials is unhelpful in dispelling them.

We recall that the Vienna Document is a key instrument for confidence- and security-building and is particularly designed to increase openness, transparency and predictability regarding the military activities. We call upon Russia to live up to its obligations under this politically binding document and engage within the relevant mechanism in order to de-escalate situation.

The Georgian side is concerned over the drastic rise in ceasefire violations over the past days, in Donetsk and Luhansk regions of Ukraine and by the increased number of fatalities, as reported by the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine (SMM). We regret that the SMM's assets continue to be targeted and its monitors' freedom of movement remains restricted in non-government controlled areas. Unimpeded implementation of the SMM's mandate – to observe and report on the situation on the ground, including in the areas along the Russia-Ukraine State border – is of utmost importance, particularly, during a period of heightened tensions, such as this.

As noted last week, Georgia's President expressed her solidarity with Ukraine, so did the Foreign Minister in his phone call with his Ukrainian counterpart. As a country which lived through Russia's military aggression in 2008 and which up to now endures occupation of over 20 per cent of its territory, we fully support Ukraine in its struggle for peace.

In conclusion, let me reiterate Georgia's staunch support for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders. We call upon Russia to reverse its actions, respect and uphold the principles of the international law and the Helsinki Final Act.

Thank you.



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Original: ENGLISH

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STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF BULGARIA

Madam Chairperson of the Permanent Council,
Mr. Chairperson of the Forum for Security Co-operation,
Dear colleagues,

I would like to extend our appreciating to the Swedish and Armenian Chairmanships for convening this meeting at the request of the delegation of Ukraine.

Bulgaria fully aligns itself with the statement of the European Union. I would like to add some remarks in my national capacity.

I would like to reiterate Bulgaria's unwavering support for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders.

The worsening security situation in eastern Ukraine and the build-up of Russian military forces in close proximity to Ukraine's State borders, including the illegally annexed Crimean peninsula is a matter of severe concern.

Being a Black Sea littoral State, Bulgaria has an even stronger interest in de-escalation in the region. It sincerely regrets that the Russian Federation decided not to make use of the opportunity and attend the meeting held on 10 April 2021 in accordance with Chapter III, paragraph 16.2, of the Vienna Document. It would have been able to dispel the concerns by being fully transparent and by providing information about the ongoing military activities.

We strongly encourage the Russian Federation to reconsider its approach and to make use of the consultation mechanisms provided for in the OSCE and especially in the Vienna Document.

I would like to use this opportunity and reiterate Bulgaria's full commitment to the principles and norms of arms control regimes and confidence- and security-building measures which aim to reduce risk, improve predictability and trust in the politico-military area. We would like in this respect once again to reiterate our full support for substantial modernization of the Vienna Document as a significant step towards rebuilding trust.

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

Thank you.



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Annex 14

ENGLISH

Original: RUSSIAN

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STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION

Mr. Chairperson,

The Russian Federation considers Ukraine's activation of the procedures provided for by Chapter III, paragraph 16, of the Vienna Document 2011 to be unfounded. We are not engaged in any significant military activity that requires information to be submitted under the Vienna Document 2011. The activity in question is routine and planned in nature, is being carried out as part of the winter training period, which is coming to a close, for units and subunits, including those of the Southern Military District, and does not require notification. The movement of Russian subunits is taking place within the framework of combat training (I emphasize this point!) on our national territory, is appropriate for the situation and does not affect the security of other States.

The objectives and purposes of this exercise have been made public. Detailed coverage of the exercise is being given on the official website of the Ministry of Defence of the Russian Federation. As for the degree of detail in our responses to Ukraine's questions via the OSCE Communications Network, it was fully commensurate with the degree of argumentation and credibility of the questions themselves.

"Unusual military activities" are indeed taking place in Europe. They have been occurring in Donbas since 2014, moreover with countless violations of the Vienna Document 2011. It is Ukraine, which by all accounts has been steered from the outside since that time, that is doing this.

For seven consecutive years, Ukraine has been conducting military activities on its territory involving up to 70,000 troops and large quantities of heavy equipment, without providing the notifications required under the Vienna Document 2011 and without inviting observers to this area. I am referring to the Ukrainian Government's failure to comply with the following provisions:

- Paragraphs 10.3 to 10.3.3, in accordance with which notification should be provided of increases in personnel strength of units and formations or the temporary activation

of “non-active” units and formations (and several stages of the mobilization conducted by Ukraine should have resulted in precisely these consequences);

- Paragraphs 38 to 46.2, in accordance with which military activity is subject to notification whenever it involves at least 9,000 troops, 250 battle tanks, 500 armoured combat vehicles (ACVs) or 250 units of artillery (100 mm calibre and above);
- Paragraphs 47 to 60, in accordance with which participating States are obliged to invite observers to different kinds of notifiable military activities in which the number of troops engaged exceeds 13,000, the number of battle tanks equals or exceeds 300, the number of ACVs equals or exceeds 500, or the number of artillery pieces, including mortars and multiple rocket launchers, equals or exceeds 250.

Furthermore, the Ukrainian Government is not complying with paragraph 68, in accordance with which it is obliged to communicate in writing, by 15 November each year, information concerning military activities involving more than 40,000 troops or 900 battle tanks or 2,000 ACVs or 900 artillery pieces, mortars and multiple rocket launchers (100 mm calibre and above). In accordance with paragraph 70, however, Ukraine undertook not to conduct such military activities if notification had not been provided in a timely manner.

Despite countless violations by the Ukrainian Government, Russia has never activated the provisions of Chapter III, paragraph 16, of the Vienna Document 2011, understanding that questions put directly would not receive answers.

What is surprising is the lack of response to these violations by Western countries, which, judging by their statements today, are presenting themselves as champions of military transparency. Their hypocritical disregard for truly unusual military activity – the Ukrainian Government’s continuing punitive operation against the civilian population of Donbas – against the backdrop of their exaggerated interest in routine Russian low-intensity exercises involving a minimum number of weapons and personnel, discredits the Vienna Document as an instrument of confidence-building among the participating States.

Private briefings of some kind on the situation at the Russian-Ukrainian border held by the delegation of Ukraine at the OSCE on 8 and 9 April and the non-paper on this topic distributed by the delegation “among a small circle of States” are in the same vein. Incidentally, access to the consultations under paragraph 16.2 of the Vienna Document, convened by Ukraine on 10 April, was not granted to all participating States either. What is this – transparency “behind closed doors” for a narrow circle of the “chosen few”? It is reminiscent of a pre-planned public relations stunt, in which the OSCE participating States interested in escalating tensions distort the situation at the Russian-Ukrainian border in an attempt to place all the responsibility on Russia.

We regard such a policy as a deliberate effort to distract attention from the Ukrainian Government’s military preparations in the south-east of the country, its refusal to implement the Minsk agreements, along with the build-up of military activity by NATO countries in Ukraine and close to Russia’s borders.

There is no trace either of President Zelenskyy's pre-election statements promising to end the war. To the approving chorus of its Western "minders", the Ukrainian Government is currently updating its mobilization plans to call up reservists and massing troops in the Kherson region on the border with Crimea and near the line of contact in Donbas. A group of around 60,000 Ukrainian troops is concentrated in the zone where the so-called Joint Forces Operation is being conducted. Special Operations Forces, sniper teams and sabotage groups are being deployed. "Fresh" formations are being brought in. Formations are armed and equipped to 95 per cent.

A spike in violations of the ceasefire regime in Donbas already suggests that the Ukrainian armed forces have adopted a policy of escalating provocative actions. Settlements are being shelled. A child and a pensioner have been killed. Between 1 March and 11 April, monitors from the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine (SMM) documented over 320 sightings of Ukrainian weapons, almost half of which were large-calibre heavy artillery, at Donbas railway stations controlled by the Ukrainian armed forces. Ukrainian weapons outside their designated storage sites have been caught on SMM cameras some 500 times in total.

The actions and rhetoric of the Kyiv authorities' external "minders" – the United States of America and its NATO allies – point to the fact that they are pushing their "clients" towards a military solution. Contrary to their solemn declarations of commitment to a peaceful settlement, they are in fact turning Ukraine into the "tinderbox" of Europe. I am referring to the training and financing of the Ukrainian armed forces and other armed formations, sometimes openly neo-Nazi ones, and to them being provided with intelligence and political cover. Furthermore, NATO countries are supplying Ukraine with anti-tank weapons, armoured vehicles, counter-battery radar systems, sniper rifles, unmanned aerial vehicles, boats and various types of ammunition for groups of government forces.

At the same time, NATO is intensifying its various activities in Ukraine and in the immediate vicinity of the line of contact in Donbas. Seven joint exercises with NATO States are scheduled to be held on Ukrainian territory this year, and the "Defender Europe 2021" manoeuvres involving Ukrainian forces will be the largest in the last 25 years.

The NATO countries do not shrink from provocative actions near Russia's borders, where, for example, the United States has doubled its aerial reconnaissance since the start of the year and increased its naval reconnaissance by a factor of 1.5. We are closely monitoring the US warships currently in the waters of the Black Sea. The question remains open as to the true intentions and objectives of the United States thousands of kilometres away from its own territory.

Let us offer a word of caution: by providing comprehensive support to Ukraine, the countries concerned assume a large part of the responsibility for the reckless course of the Kyiv regime and its possible consequences.

Mr. Chairperson,

If the OSCE participating States want to prevent an escalation of tensions not only in words but also in deeds, they should not call on Russia to "scale down its military build-up"

on its own territory (a non-existent build-up!), but should force the Ukrainian Government to abandon its militaristic rhetoric and refrain from a bloody and suicidal venture.

The Russian Federation advocates a peaceful settlement of the internal Ukrainian conflict through direct dialogue between the Ukrainian Government and the authorities in Donetsk and Luhansk on the basis of strict compliance with the Minsk agreements in their entirety and in the correct sequence. We urge others to do the same. We, for our part, will do everything possible to restore peace in Donbas and protect its civilian population.

In conclusion, I should like to emphasize that Russia is against the adoption of any decisions at this meeting or the approval of recommendations.

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



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Original: ENGLISH

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STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF LATVIA

Co-Chairpersons,

Latvia fully aligns with the European Union statements, however, I would like to add some points in my national capacity.

We thank the Chairmanship of the Permanent Council and the Chairmanship of the Forum for Security Co-operation (FSC) for convening this meeting at Ukraine's request in accordance with Chapter III of the Vienna Document. The Russian Federation's refusal to respond to Ukraine's information request in a meaningful manner and refusal to participate in consultations on 10 April as well as the refusal up to now to engage in a meaningful dialogue in order to decrease concerns, to highlight its true intentions and de-escalate the situation is a deliberate and hostile act to increase tensions and distrust in the region.

We are deeply concerned by the worsening security situation in eastern Ukraine, and the build-up of Russian military forces in close proximity to Ukraine's State borders, in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine, including on the illegally annexed Crimean peninsula.

We are also concerned about the aggressive rhetoric and disinformation used by the Russian Federation. Unfortunately, the Russian Federation's words and deeds are not aligned. While in its statements the Russian Federation argues that it is doing everything to help solve the conflict, such rhetoric does not reflect the Russian Federation's true actions. The Russian Federation portrays Ukraine as the party fully responsible for escalation of the security situation in the region, yet its own hostile activities, aggressive rhetoric and disinformation used to justify them fuel the escalation of the situation in the first place. This is a very dangerous move for the Russian Federation itself. The Russian Federation's actions not only jeopardize the security of Ukraine, but also threaten European security as a whole and go together with the disrespect for the value of the lives of people affected.

Responsible use of freedom of the press and freedom of expression is one of the core commitments of the OSCE participating States. We do trust the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media will pay attention to this worrying tendency of the Russian

Federation's extensive disinformation dispelled to jeopardize security and peace in Ukraine and triggering serious security concerns beyond its borders in the OSCE area.

Co-Chairpersons,

Respect for internationally recognized borders, the peaceful resolution of conflicts, trust and transparency, are all at the core of the OSCE's founding principles and commitments. The Vienna Document, which all participating States have signed up to, was expressly designed to aid us in abiding by these principles and commitments, and its risk reduction mechanisms are of particular importance today.

In this worrisome situation, Latvia strongly supports recommendations, as referred to in paragraph 16.3.1.2 of the Vienna Document, on appropriate measures for stabilizing the situation and halting activities that give rise to concern. Latvia believes that a voluntary visit hosted by the Russian Federation to alleviate concerns about the Russian Federation's military activities, in accordance with the provisions of paragraph 18 of the Vienna Document 2011, would provide the necessary transparency and help to de-escalate the situation. In addition to the above-mentioned, further measures from the OSCE document on Stabilizing Measures for Localized Crisis Situations, such as measures of transparency, should be applied by the Russian Federation, in particular:

1. Providing regular extraordinary information on military activities in the border area, including numbers of military formations and units, and their locations; relevant weapon and equipment systems and personnel strengths; supply of major weapon and equipment systems in the border area; detailed information on command structure, disaggregated to the lowest possible level.
2. Providing regular FSC briefings on military activities in the relevant border area.

These measures would contribute to security- and confidence-building and dispel mistrust among participating States.

We urge the Russian Federation to de-escalate the situation, and to engage in constructive consultations in accordance with the Vienna Document provisions on risk reduction, which the Russian Federation has itself committed to.

In conclusion, Latvia expresses once again its strong and continuous support for Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity in its internationally recognized borders. To express solidarity and reaffirm Latvia's unwavering support for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine, Latvian Minister for Foreign Affairs Edgars Rinkēvičs will make a working visit to Ukraine tomorrow, 15 April.

I kindly ask to attach my statement to the journal of the day.

I thank you, Co-Chairpersons.