

Chairmanship: Germany**956th PLENARY MEETING OF THE FORUM**

1. Date: Wednesday, 30 September 2020 (in the Neuer Saal and via video teleconference)

Opened: 10.05 a.m.
Suspended: 1.05 p.m.
Resumed: 3.05 p.m.
Closed: 4.05 p.m.

2. Chairperson: Ambassador G. Bräutigam

Prior to taking up the agenda, the Chairperson reminded the Forum for Security Co-operation (FSC) of the modalities for that blended FSC meeting during the COVID-19 pandemic, conducted in accordance with FSC.GAL/92/20.

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

Agenda item 1: SECURITY DIALOGUE ON THE VIENNA DOCUMENT
2011: “VIENNA DOCUMENT MODERNIZATION”

- *Presentation by Colonel H. de Solages, Head of the Verification Agency of France*
- *Presentation by Brigadier General P. Braunstein, Head of the Verification Agency of Germany*
- *Presentation by Mr. K. Podbevsek, Associate Arms Control Officer, Conflict Prevention Centre, OSCE Secretariat*

Chairperson, Colonel H. de Solages, Brigadier General P. Braunstein, Representative of the OSCE Conflict Prevention Centre, Germany-European Union (with the candidate countries Albania, Montenegro and North Macedonia; the European Free Trade Association countries Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway, members of the European Economic Area; as well as Andorra, Georgia, Moldova, San Marino and Ukraine, in alignment) (FSC.DEL/224/20), France (Annex 1), Switzerland, Canada, United States of

America (Annex 2), United Kingdom (FSC.DEL/222/20 OSCE+), Turkey (Annex 3), Ukraine (FSC.DEL/219/20 OSCE+), Armenia (Annex 4), Austria, Azerbaijan (Annex 5), FSC Co-ordinator for the Vienna Document (Sweden), Russian Federation (Annex 6)

Agenda item 2: DECISION ON THE UPDATED BEST PRACTICE GUIDE
ON DEACTIVATION OF SMALL ARMS AND LIGHT
WEAPONS

Chairperson

Decision: The FSC adopted Decision No. 4/20 (FSC.DEC/4/20) on the updated best practice guide on deactivation of small arms and light weapons, the text of which is appended to this journal.

Russian Federation (interpretative statement, see attachment to the decision), Chairperson, Chairperson of the Informal Group of Friends on Small Arms and Light Weapons and Stockpiles of Conventional Ammunition (Latvia) (Annex 7)

Agenda item 3: GENERAL STATEMENTS

Situation in and around Ukraine: Ukraine (FSC.DEL/220/20), Germany-European Union (with the candidate countries Albania, Montenegro and North Macedonia; the European Free Trade Association countries Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway, members of the European Economic Area; as well as Andorra, Georgia, Moldova, San Marino and Ukraine, in alignment) (FSC.DEL/225/20), Canada, United States of America, United Kingdom (FSC.DEL/223/20 OSCE+), Russian Federation (Annex 8)

Agenda item 4: ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- (a) *Military exercise “Brilliant Jump II 2020”, to be conducted from 28 October to 6 November 2020:* Poland (FSC.DEL/221/20 OSCE+)
- (b) *Military exercise “Brilliant Jump II 2020”, to be conducted from 28 October to 6 November 2020, and military exercise “Iron Wolf 2020-II”, to be conducted from 3 to 17 November 2020:* Lithuania
- (c) *Transparency of the military exercises “Brilliant Jump II 2020”, to be conducted from 28 October to 6 November 2020, and “Slavic Brotherhood 2020”, conducted from 22 to 25 September 2020:* Belarus
- (d) *Update on the military exercise “Arctic Lock 2021”, to be conducted from May to June 2021:* Finland

4. Next meeting:

Wednesday, 7 October 2020, 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/962
30 September 2020
Annex 1

ENGLISH
Original: FRENCH

956th Plenary Meeting
FSC Journal No. 962, Agenda item 1

STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF FRANCE

Madam Chairperson,
Dear colleagues,

France fully supports the statements by the European Union and its Member States. Nonetheless, we wish to add a few comments in our national capacity.

France is pleased to welcome Colonel de Solages, Brigadier General Braunstein and Kristijan Podbevsek to today's Security Dialogue and thanks them sincerely for their excellent presentations. We are convinced of the benefits of the exchange of experiences and hope that the forthcoming discussions will make the most of this opportunity.

The Vienna Document remains a key pillar of the conventional arms control architecture established over the past decades to enhance transparency, confidence and security in the Euro-Atlantic area. These objectives can only be achieved through the full and meaningful implementation of our existing instruments. However, for them to be better implemented, these instruments must be modernized in order to adapt them to the new strategic realities.

Madam Chairperson, in a troubled geopolitical landscape, exacerbated by a pandemic unprecedented in the twenty-first century, most of our verification activities have been suspended. France supported the prompt resumption of verification activities as soon as the conditions were in place to ensure the safety of the experts. After an in-depth analysis of the risks associated with COVID-19, sanitary and operational procedures were adopted for the implementation of certain verification activities. As of 1 July, our teams were ready to engage in these activities on a reciprocal basis. At the last Structured Dialogue, we distributed a non-paper aimed at initiating a dialogue on this issue and proposing possible courses of action. Our objective is to avoid finding ourselves in a situation where all confidence- and security-building measures are suspended *sine die*. As mentioned by our German partners, the sharing of best practices is particularly valuable in this context and we are ready to share our experiences.

Madam Chairperson, we remain committed to the full implementation of the Vienna Document and advocate its substantive modernization to further increase military stability, transparency and predictability. In this context, the joint proposal for the modernization of the

Vienna Document supported by 34 participating States provides an opportunity to initiate genuine negotiations and productive exchanges, thus establishing the OSCE as a platform for mutual dialogue on security aspects in the Euro-Atlantic area.

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

Thank you.



956th Plenary Meeting
FSC Journal No. 962, Agenda item 1

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

Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Thank you for organizing today's discussion, and thanks to our distinguished speakers for sharing their insights on Vienna Document modernization.

The Vienna Document serves as a critical confidence- and security-building measure, intended to provide transparency, reassure neighbours, and, ultimately, prevent conflict in Europe. We all recognize the Vienna Document as one of the OSCE's most significant contributions in the politico-military sphere, if not the most significant. The German Chairmanship's focus on updating the Vienna Document highlights this instrument's continued usefulness in addressing a number of security threats, but it also points to a number of current gaps. Updating the Vienna Document to reflect current-day realities is a central task for the Forum for Security Co-operation and a responsibility of all participating States.

Our area, formerly a beacon of military transparency, now finds itself in an environment where some participating States limit their application of the Vienna Document provisions and block efforts to update the Vienna Document to address current-day concerns. This, together with aggressive actions by some participating States, has created a crisis of confidence in Europe today.

Madam Chairperson,

It is important to remember that the Vienna Document was always intended as a living document that would adapt to meet new security realities. As recalled in paragraph 6 of the Vienna Document, the OSCE participating States committed in 2010, by FSC decision, that they would update and revise the Vienna Document on a regular basis, reissuing it every five years or more frequently. The fact that this pledge has not been realized is deeply concerning, especially given the erosion of the security environment we have seen since the last Vienna Document update almost a decade ago in 2011.

The comprehensive proposal tabled in October 2019 to modernize the Vienna Document, now with 34 co-sponsors, covers a wide range of broadly supported initiatives that address declarations of military information; composition and size of inspection and evaluation teams; thresholds for notification and observation of certain types of military

activity and new proposals on risk reduction, incidents and accidents; and procedures to address “snap” or no-notice exercises which have become one of the more alarming military activities in recent years.

Madam Chairperson,

The United States reiterates that this joint proposal should be seen as a starting point for negotiations, not a take-it-or-leave-it proposition. We never intended to exclude other ideas which can be addressed in the course of negotiations. Similarly, elements of the joint proposal may be amended or adjusted in the course of negotiations.

The joint proposal was the result of extensive discussions among many participating States. We grappled with questions of how to merge numerous individual proposals that had been on the table for years and that had gained widespread support, while also identifying new concepts that needed to be integrated to ensure that Vienna Document provisions would address modern day security concerns. At the same time, we had to overcome numerous technical and implementation challenges and think through second- and third-order effects.

I hope that the willingness of many of us to work together constructively and find areas of compromise can be an example we can all follow as we conduct our work in the Forum for Security Co-operation and in Working Group A. We need to begin negotiations among all 57 participating States in earnest, find areas of compromise, and work together to take some practical steps to begin to rebuild trust and enhance military transparency.

Last year, we joined the majority of participating States in advocating for a ministerial declaration pledging to achieve substantial progress on Vienna Document modernization by the Tirana Ministerial Council in 2020. We regret that this commitment was not universally shared and that a declaration did not achieve consensus in Bratislava. We also regret that we do not appear much closer to updating the Vienna Document today than we were in Bratislava.

Throughout 2020, a majority of participating States have repeated the call for Vienna Document modernization, including at sessions of the Structured Dialogue, regarding this as a critical first step towards rebuilding trust and affirming the role of conventional arms control. As we approach the 2020 ministerial, which will mark the 30th anniversary of the Vienna Document, our goal should be to build momentum for a focused negotiation to achieve an updated Vienna Document next year. We can do this. These issues are familiar. The methods of military transparency and information sharing do not require breakthrough analysis. We dismiss out of hand any notion that establishing such a goal is too ambitious, too rushed. In fact, it will be ten years overdue in 2021. A genuine, collective effort by all OSCE participating States resulting in a modernized Vienna Document will help us to rebuild trust and confidence and provide for military transparency now and in the future.

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Please attach this statement to the journal of the day.



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

FSC.JOUR/962
30 September 2020
Annex 3

Original: ENGLISH

956th Plenary Meeting
FSC Journal No. 962, Agenda item 1

STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF TURKEY

Madam Chairperson,

We should like to join the other delegations in thanking our guest speakers for their presentations. We also commend the German Chairmanship of the Forum for Security Co-operation (FSC) for devoting today's Security Dialogue to the modernization of the Vienna Document 2011.

Turkey strongly believes that the Vienna Document, together with the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE Treaty) and the Treaty on Open Skies, constitutes one of the main pillars of the European conventional security architecture. Accordingly, Turkey attaches great importance to full implementation of the Vienna Document and to its modernization.

Implementation of the Vienna Document in full and in good faith is essential for building trust and confidence among the OSCE participating States and thereby ensuring a strengthened security community.

At this year's Annual Implementation Assessment Meeting, all the participating States emphasized the relevance of the Vienna Document and of full implementation of the commitments laid down therein.

We have also taken note of the calls made by all participating States during FSC meetings for the commitments under the Vienna Document to be fulfilled in both letter and spirit, and for any selective approaches to be avoided.

Madam Chairperson,

As was clearly pointed out in our note verbale of 30 July 2020, distributed under reference number SEC/DEL/278/20, and later in our statement at the FSC plenary meeting of 9 September 2020 (FSC.DEL/176/20), Armenia has violated its commitments under the Vienna Document by announcing that it "will not be in a position to accept military inspections by the Republic of Turkey and guest inspectors from Turkey under the CFE Treaty and the Vienna Document on the territory of the Republic of Armenia" (SEC.DEL/273/20).

Once more, we call on Armenia to adhere fully to its commitments under the Vienna Document. We also request all the participating States to provide an adequate response to this attempt by Armenia to adopt a selective approach to its implementation of the Vienna Document.

Madam Chairperson,

As for modernizing the Vienna Document, it cannot be denied that the security environment has changed considerably since 2011: a meaningful update of this instrument is clearly necessary. We hope that the new joint proposal for modernization of the Vienna Document, currently co-sponsored by 34 participating States, will make a valuable contribution in that regard.

We believe that the FSC is the main platform for discussing proposals to update and modernize the Vienna Document, along with the specific further steps to be taken. We join the call for all participating States to engage constructively in the discussions to that end.

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

Thank you.



956th Plenary Meeting
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STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF ARMENIA

Madam Chairperson,

At the outset, we would like to join others in thanking the German FSC Chairmanship for dedicating this Security Dialogue to the Vienna Document 2011. We would like to welcome today's speakers and thank them for their thought-provoking presentations.

The position of Armenia regarding the Vienna Document and its implementation is very well known. During the year we have had several opportunities to elaborate in detail on this topic. We fully share the view contained in the FSC Chairmanship's concept note that the Vienna Document is the key instrument for confidence-building measures within the OSCE framework and is an essential part of the OSCE's security architecture in the politico-military sphere. The existing threats and challenges in the OSCE area, including ongoing conflicts and tensions, make this assertion even more important. Therefore, full implementation in both letter and spirit of the provisions of the Vienna Document is of particular importance for ensuring trust and transparency and strengthening military predictability.

Unfortunately, our discussions in the Forum have shown that not all participating States agree on this fact. We continue to witness conditionalities in implementation of the provisions of the Vienna Document. This particularly applies to Chapter V on Prior Notification of Certain Military Activities. My delegation has on several occasions presented to the participating States cases of blatant violations of important provisions contained in this chapter.

In this context I would like to recall that last year Azerbaijan conducted four large-scale military exercises, including a joint exercise with Turkey, and failed to provide any prior notification via the OSCE Communications Network. It is important to note that the drills were offensive in their scenarios.

From 11 to 15 March 2019, military exercises took place in Azerbaijan involving up to 10,000 military personnel, up to 500 tanks, up to 300 missile and artillery systems of various calibres, multiple-launch rocket systems and mortars. From 1 to 3 May, Azerbaijani-Turkish joint tactical live-fire exercises were held in Azerbaijan but the parameters were not disclosed and our request for details at the FSC meeting was disregarded. From 20 to 24 May there was a large-scale military exercise involving more than 10,000 military personnel, 150 tanks and other armoured vehicles, up to 200 artillery pieces,

mortars and multiple rocket launchers of different calibres, and up to 35 aircraft and helicopters. From 16 to 20 September further large-scale military exercises involved up to 10,000 military personnel, 100 tanks and other armoured vehicles, 150 artillery pieces, mortars and multiple rocket launchers of varying calibres, and up to 20 aircraft and helicopters.

In the present year, furthermore, from 2 to 6 March 2020, Azerbaijan conducted another large-scale military exercise and once again rejected our requests that it provide information and comply with the transparency measures enshrined in the Vienna Document. Subsequently, exercises conducted from 18 to 22 May involved up to 10,000 military personnel, up to 120 tanks and armoured vehicles, up to 200 missile and artillery systems of various calibres, multiple launch rocket systems and mortars, and up to 30 army and front-line aviation.

In the course of the present year we also informed the participating States, with deep concern, of the Turkish-Azerbaijani joint military exercises held immediately after the Azerbaijani military offensive against the north-eastern part of Armenia's State border in July. The exercises involved thousands of military personnel, hundreds of armoured combat vehicles, artillery, and military aviation including unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs). As we pointed out, after the military exercise Turkish military personnel and equipment remained stationed in Azerbaijan.

In all above-mentioned cases, in the spirit of transparency, the delegation of Armenia sought information in the Forum. Regrettably, the countries concerned either rejected our requests or justified their non-compliance by invoking conflict-related issues. In this regard we pointed out that linking these exercises with the conflict was a clear early warning sign of Azerbaijani preparation for another offensive.

And indeed, early in the morning of 27 September the Azerbaijani armed forces unleashed large-scale aggression along the entire Line of Contact. The defence installations of the Artsakh Defence Army came under heavy shelling and bombardment, as also did civilian infrastructure and settlements, including the capital city of Stepanakert, from tanks, helicopters, heavy artillery, UAVs and multiple rocket launchers including ones with calibres of 300 mm or more. Turkish military equipment is also heavily engaged in this military offensive. Yesterday, on 29 September, F-16 Turkish fighter jets performing a combat mission shot down a Su-25 fighter of the Armenian Air Force in the airspace of the Republic of Armenia.

The scale of the attacks and the range of weaponry used prove beyond doubt that this aggression was pre-planned and is being carried out by Azerbaijan in close co-operation and with the support and involvement of the Turkish military. Such aggression could not be implemented on short-notice planning.

Madam Chairperson,

Coming back to the guiding question of the concept note we would like to outline two important elements with regard to improving the overall level of implementation of the Vienna Document.

First, the main objective of the Vienna Document and other confidence- and security-building measures is the prevention of the threat or use of force. Any threat or use of force is a challenge to military and political stability in the entire OSCE area.

Second, it should be acknowledged that when OSCE participating States turn a blind eye to arbitrary and selective implementation of the Vienna Document, this encourages further violations and destabilization of the security environment, as it has been the case with Turkey and Azerbaijan.

We would like to conclude by reiterating that Armenia is fully committed to the Vienna Document both in letter and spirit. We continue to believe that the enhancement of compliance with our obligations and commitments remains a *sine qua non* for peace and stability in the OSCE area.

Madam Chairperson,

In reaction to the statement of the delegation of Turkey regarding the decision of Armenia to suspend military inspections and visits by guest inspectors from Turkey under the CFE Treaty and the Vienna Document, I believe my statement has provided enough detail on the reasons behind our decision. Taking into account the fact that Turkey has declared itself as party to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and is actively engaged in aggression against Armenia, our actions are more than legitimate and justified.

The Armenian delegation also elaborated its position on this issue exhaustively during the 1277th Permanent Council meeting when discussing the current issue entitled “Turkey’s aggressive policy and military posturing as a destabilizing factor in the South Caucasus”. I would encourage the representative of Turkey to re-read our statement, which is self-explanatory and has been distributed under the reference number PC.DEL/1093/20.

Thank you.



956th Plenary Meeting
FSC Journal No. 962, Agenda item 1

STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF AZERBAIJAN

Madam Chairperson,

First of all, we should like to thank the German Chairmanship of the Forum for Security Co-operation (FSC) for organizing today's Security Dialogue on modernization of the Vienna Document 2011. We also join the delegations that took the floor before us in expressing our appreciation to the panellists for their informative presentations.

Azerbaijan has always welcomed comprehensive discussions on the implementation and modernization of the Vienna Document. Application of existing regimes of confidence- and security-building measures (CSBMs) and the implementation of our commitments under these regimes both in letter and spirit, including the commitments laid down in the Vienna Document, are of high value and importance to security and stability in the OSCE area.

Our general approach to CSBMs, including those contained in the Vienna Document, is based on the firm conviction that such measures are not an end in themselves but a means of finding solutions to threats and challenges to our security and stability. Confidence- and security-building measures are intended to give effect and expression to participating States' duty to refrain from the threat or use of force in their mutual relations and in international relations in general, as stipulated in the Vienna Document. In this regard, when discussing CSBMs it is essential to take into account their interrelationship with the broader politico-military context, which continues to be marked by grave violations of our shared principles and commitments – first and foremost the obligation to refrain from using force to encroach on the territorial integrity of States. The illegal use of force, naked military aggression and continuous occupation of other States' territories make up the harsh reality in the OSCE area that cannot be ignored. Efforts to enhance implementation of the Vienna Document and to update it should therefore start with a comprehensive review of the current security environment and of the challenges faced in implementation of the existing CSBM regimes.

The delegation of Azerbaijan has been continuously bringing to the Forum's attention blatant and deliberate violations by Armenia of our shared fundamental norms and principles, which underpin and constitute the very essence of the Vienna Document. We have presented on multiple occasions undeniable facts and evidence of Armenia's egregious infringement of the letter and the spirit of the Vienna Document and other OSCE politico-military

instruments. We have repeatedly warned against the adverse effects of Armenia's outright disregard for its commitments and obligations.

To cite one example, Armenia has persistently been providing false and incomplete information on its armed forces in the annual exchange of military information under the Vienna Document. The annual reports distributed by Armenia do not reflect the real situation on the ground, since they do not cover the military personnel and equipment that Armenia is illegally deploying in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan. Furthermore, Armenia has been engaged in a massive military build-up in these territories of Azerbaijan, by illegally transferring and diverting weapons and ammunitions to the occupied territories. Thus, Armenia has been taking advantage of the fragmentation of the zone of application of CSBMs, which is a direct result of its ongoing military occupation of Azerbaijan's territories, in order to conceal its military potential from relevant arms control mechanisms.

On another note and in support of the statement delivered by Turkey earlier today, we wish to remind the Forum of another blatant violation by Armenia of its obligations under the Vienna Document. As is known, Armenia announced, in a note verbale dated 29 July 2020 and distributed under reference number SEC.DEL/273/20, that it is not in a position to accept military inspections by Turkey under the Vienna Document and the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe. That announcement is a further clear and outrageous violation by Armenia of its obligations and commitments under these instruments. It also vividly illustrates both Armenia's discriminative approach to its commitments in the politico-military dimension and its consistent policy of undermining the fragile security environment in the region.

As we speak, the detrimental consequences of the aforementioned gross violations by Armenia are manifesting themselves on the frontline. Armenia is using weapons and military equipment that it has been illegally transferring to and accumulating in the occupied territories in order to continue its aggression against Azerbaijan, to subject densely populated civilian areas and infrastructure in Azerbaijan to intensive shelling and, ultimately, to consolidate its illegal occupation of the internationally recognized territories of Azerbaijan. As a result of the latest military offensive by Armenia, which began on 27 September 2020 and is ongoing, 14 Azerbaijani civilians have so far been killed, 46 civilians wounded, and 36 residential buildings and 116 civilian facilities damaged. The targeting of civilians by the Armenian armed forces is a clear and blatant breach of international humanitarian law, including the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and their Additional Protocols.

In response to Armenia's latest attack against Azerbaijan and the continuous occupation of its territories, the armed forces of Azerbaijan are currently taking proportionate counteroffensive measures to repel this act of aggression by Armenia and to defend the territorial integrity and population of Azerbaijan. Azerbaijan is exercising its inherent right to self-defence in full accordance with Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations and customary international law. Part of the occupied territories has already been liberated from Armenian occupation. The counteroffensive operation will continue until Armenia desists from its internationally wrongful conduct, that is, from its illegal occupation of the internationally recognized territories of Azerbaijan.

As for Armenia's allegations regarding violations by Azerbaijan of its commitments under the Vienna Document in relation to the notification of military exercises, I assure the

Forum that Azerbaijan is honouring its commitments. This has been made amply clear in various statements by our delegation at relevant FSC meetings. The Armenian representative is succumbing to his usual forgetfulness, for otherwise he would have remembered the illegal military exercises regularly conducted by Armenia in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan. On a number of occasions we have raised this issue and the other aforementioned violations by Armenia of its commitments and obligations in the politico-military dimension, yet our concerns remain unaddressed.

We also resolutely reject all baseless allegations by Armenia as to the involvement of external parties in the conflict. The armed forces of Azerbaijan are well equipped, self-sufficient and fully capable of repulsing on their own the ongoing aggression by Armenia against Azerbaijan. These allegations are a futile and desperate attempt by Armenia to deflect attention from the losses suffered by its armed forces illegally deployed in the territories of Azerbaijan, and also to draw in third parties, including mercenaries and terrorist groups, in order to widen the scope of the hostilities and reverse the situation on the ground.

As regards the comments by Armenia on Turkey's role in the region, it must be reiterated that Turkey is a responsible and trusted member of the international community, including the OSCE Minsk Group. We thank Turkey for standing up unreservedly in defence of shared fundamental OSCE principles and commitments. Yet, as mentioned earlier and contrary to the claims and wishful thinking of Armenia, Turkey is not involved in any manner in the counteroffensive operation being conducted by the armed forces of Azerbaijan.

Thank you, Madam Chairperson.



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

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Annex 6

ENGLISH
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956th Plenary Meeting
FSC Journal No. 962, Agenda item 1

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

Madam Chairperson,

We thank you for organizing and holding a plenary meeting devoted to the Vienna Document 2011 on Confidence- and Security-Building Measures. We are grateful to the keynote speakers, who presented their perspectives on this complex and multifaceted topic.

We concur with the assessments made by a number of delegations to the effect that the Vienna Document is an instrument that is relevant, “alive” and functioning – one that, despite the challenges of the current times, continues to fulfil the tasks it was originally meant to, and that makes a substantial contribution to the enhancement of transparency and stability in Europe.

Russia pays considerable attention to matters relating to the practical implementation of agreed confidence- and security-building measures (CSBMs). Suffice to say that in terms of the number of verification activities hosted, our country is the most scrutinized OSCE participating State. I should like to take this opportunity to thank, on behalf of the Russian verification centre, our partners for the successful co-operation and the professionalism they showed when conducting inspections under the Vienna Document during the COVID-19 pandemic, a period that has not been easy for any of us. We intend to continue this constructive interaction.

We have listened carefully to the presentation on the efforts undertaken by the OSCE Conflict Prevention Centre to develop a system for information management and reporting in the field of CSBMs and arms control (iMARS). Software of this kind is obviously highly relevant in terms of ensuring that inspectors can go about their work effectively. A similar system has been in operation at the Russian verification centre for a long time, and consequently we do not see any practical benefits for ourselves in becoming involved in iMARS. That being said, we do believe that other participating States, should they be interested, are entitled to continue to participate in the system’s further development on a voluntary basis.

We regret to note that aspects relating to the current implementation of the Vienna Document were not included on the agenda of today's Security Dialogue. In that regard, we look forward to continuing a lively discussion of these aspects at the annual Meeting of the Heads of Verification Centres in December.

Madam Chairperson,

The Russian Federation's position regarding the prospects for modernization of the Vienna Document is well known and has not changed. It would not be amiss to recall here that over many years our country has been making a significant contribution to negotiations on CSBMs in Europe. Between 2003 and 2014, we put forward a total of 25 proposals (not counting the various versions) on how to enhance the implementation of the Vienna Document. Yet, for a long time the members of NATO have been shrinking from a substantive discussion of the issues raised by us.

The history of the European security system attests to the fact that the Vienna Document is evolving not in isolation, but, rather, that it is closely interlinked with the overall security situation in Europe. Let us now take a look at the politico-military backdrop against which OSCE participating States are making their pronouncements about the need to modernize the Vienna Document.

The military infrastructure of the United States of America and NATO has moved closer to Russia's borders. Military contingents are permanently deployed in the Baltic States, Poland and Romania. The establishment of storage facilities in Eastern Europe and the Baltic States to support the deployment and operation of several thousand more troops and the enhancement of "military mobility" to rapidly increase the strike capability of NATO forces in the east – all this is perceived by us as offensive preparations by the Alliance.

There has been an intensification of naval and air force activity of the NATO countries in the Baltic Sea and Black Sea and also in the airspace over their waters. Significantly, up to 40 per cent of the Alliance's warships entering the Black Sea are equipped with long-range precision weapons.

I shall cite just a few recent examples of the allegedly "peace-loving" policy of NATO, which proclaims its readiness to "engage in dialogue" with Russia.

On 28 August, as planned by the United States Strategic Command, a special military exercise called "Allied Sky 2020" was conducted, in the course of which B-52 strategic bombers carried out a mock strike against targets on Russian territory with air-launched cruise missiles. On 4 and 14 September, aircraft of the same type flew over the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov to conduct a mock missile strike against targets on the territory of our country's Southern Military District. From 1 to 10 September, a training exercise of the United States armed forces took place in Estonia; it involved the deployment of multiple-launch rocket systems in the immediate vicinity of the Russian border. This list of examples is by no means exhaustive.

We would be curious to hear the answer to the following question: how would the United States react if the Russian military were to conduct such activities near the US border?

To us it is evident that the actions of the United States and its allies are of a hostile and provocative nature, and, what is more, that they may well destabilize the European security situation. In no way do they square with calls for the enhancement of transparency in the military sphere.

The Russian Federation has on several occasions proposed that the countries of the North Atlantic Alliance reduce the intensity of their military activities, limit their training events and move exercise zones away from the Russia-NATO line of contact. We for our part conduct most of our armed forces' operational and combat training exercises deep inside the country. Unfortunately, it seems that the United States and the other NATO countries are for now not really interested in de-escalating the situation, preventing dangerous military incidents and increasing the predictability of military activities.

We have also pointed out several times that some of the States that co-authored the "package of 34" – that is, the joint proposal for modernization of the Vienna Document supported by 34 participating States – are themselves not particularly solicitous about implementing in full the provisions of the Vienna Document. This refers in particular to the provisions on notifying increases in personnel strength for combat units and formations, including "non-active" ones.

It is also worth mentioning that the CSBM-related instruments have been considerably discredited by Western countries. For example, when these instruments were used in 2014, the States involved failed to identify any unusual military activity or destabilizing concentration of forces in areas adjacent to Ukraine. Nevertheless, groundless accusations continued to be levelled at us all the same. We doubt that this tendency to "devalue" the CSBM toolbox can be reconciled with the calls by the aforementioned "Group of 34" for that toolbox to be comprehensively updated.

Today, the head of the German verification centre, Brigadier General Peter Braunstein, asked the delegation of the Russian Federation what had to be done so that our country would reconsider its position of principle regarding the prospects for updating the confidence-building measures. The answer is obvious. In order to create conditions for a discussion on CSBMs, the Alliance must desist from intensifying its activity on the eastern flank and then scale it down. Once military tensions have been reduced, the policy of sanctions revoked and, finally, trust restored, it will become possible to consider this matter again. A predictable environment is needed for negotiations on military security. For example, the commitment of all States Parties to refrain from any steps to change the level, configuration and deployment of forces was a key condition for launching and conducting the negotiation process on the adaptation of the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (1996 to 1999).

For the time being, though, given the current security environment, the door to modernization of the Vienna Document 2011 remains closed.

We call on our partners to fulfil their obligations unconditionally and to create a favourable atmosphere for further joint work. As we see it, there is a lot for them to ponder over: they must choose whether their priority is to be "containment" of Russia by force or whether it is to be dialogue with our country, notably on a wide range of issues related to CSBMs. One cannot have one's cake and eat it too.

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



956th Plenary Meeting

FSC Journal No. 962, Agenda item 2

**STATEMENT BY
THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE INFORMAL GROUP OF FRIENDS ON
SMALL ARMS AND LIGHT WEAPONS AND STOCKPILES OF
CONVENTIONAL AMMUNITION (LATVIA)**

Thank you, Madam Chairperson.
Dear colleagues,

In my capacity as Chairperson of the Informal Group of Friends on Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) and Stockpiles of Conventional Ammunition (SCA), I should like to express my greatest appreciation at the adoption of the decision on the updated best practice guide (BPG) on deactivation of SALW, or to give it its proper title, Best Practice Guide on Minimum Standards for National Procedures for the Deactivation of Small Arms and Light Weapons. First adopted in 2018, it has been reviewed and updated to ensure that it remains relevant and applicable. In recognition of the importance of ensuring irreversible SALW deactivation, the OSCE minimum standards have been strengthened by a number of technical updates for rendering SALW and their essential parts permanently inoperable. In practice, it means that:

1. The reactivation of a firearm by the use of ordinary tools is prevented;
2. The technical specifications for deactivation are applied to the essential parts of weapons;
3. Incomplete deactivation of SALW is not allowed;
4. Participating States who have neither deactivation nor verifying entities are provided with the option of requesting the assistance of such entities from another participating State in carrying out or verifying the deactivation of a firearm.

The BPG helps to establish a common understanding of vital aspects of SALW deactivation amongst all 57 OSCE participating States and lays the ground for practical OSCE assistance in this area for interested States.

Although the updated BPG is not binding in nature, I invite the participating States to use it as a source of guidance for national policymaking and I would encourage the voluntary

implementation of higher common standards for tackling the risks and challenges caused by reactivated, converted or otherwise illegally modified SALW. I also invite the OSCE Partners for Co-operation to make use of the updated BPG.

I would like to thank all the participating States who were involved and supported the BPG update. Especially, I would like to commend our German and French colleagues for the leading role they took in this process.

Today the participating States adopted a decision on the first updated OSCE best practice guide on SALW. I am very pleased to note that work on updating other OSCE BPGs on SALW and conventional ammunition continues apace.

I am pleased to note that the United States of America, as a lead State for the update of three BPGs, is calling for an expert meeting on 6 October 2020. Technical experts from capitals who are engaged in the review process of these BPG updates are invited to attend this meeting.

As a follow-on step, at the 12 October meeting of the Informal Group of Friends on SALW and SCA, to which you are all cordially invited, information will be presented on progress in updating the OSCE BPGs on SALW and CA. The invitation to this meeting will be distributed in due course.

Once again, I wish to commend the work of the participating States actively involved in the update process for the OSCE BPGs on SALW and CA, and invite others to join in these efforts.

Thank you for your attention. I kindly 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**

FSC.JOUR/962
30 September 2020
Annex 8

ENGLISH
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956th Plenary Meeting
FSC Journal No. 962, Agenda item 3

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

Madam Chairperson,

I hope that the distinguished delegations of Ukraine, the United States of America, the European Union, the United Kingdom and Canada have discussed all the issues that are of interest to them. To my understanding, today, just as before, there was nothing new to be heard in their statements. Consequently, we, too, have nothing to add today. Our position on the settlement of the internal Ukrainian conflict is well known and has been voiced here at the OSCE repeatedly. In order to save time, we shall distribute the complete text of our statement in written form. I would request, Madam Chairperson, that it be attached to the journal of the day.

Madam Chairperson,

Our position regarding the internal Ukrainian conflict remains unchanged – there needs to be full implementation of the Minsk Package of Measures of 12 February 2015 through direct dialogue between the Ukrainian Government and the authorities in Donetsk and Luhansk. The Russian Federation, as a mediator alongside the OSCE, France and Germany, stands ready to facilitate this in every possible way.

The armed confrontation in Donbas has already claimed the lives of more than 13,000 people. This is the price that the inhabitants of Donbas have had to pay for disagreeing with the course of the politicians who came to power almost seven years ago after the anti-constitutional coup d'état in Ukraine. The massive loss of civilian life, unceasing violations of human rights, and instances of abuse and torture by the Ukrainian military have all been recorded in reports by authoritative international organizations.

A recent report by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) notes that between 1 January and 31 July of this year territories not controlled by the Ukrainian Government accounted, as in the past, for the overwhelming majority of civilian casualties, namely more than 85 per cent (51 persons injured and 7 killed). A similar situation pertains regarding the number of attacks on civilian objects – almost 87 per cent of the destruction was recorded in certain areas of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions, with over a dozen educational facilities for children affected. United

Nations observers have confirmed that during the period in question the Ukrainian military employed artillery, small arms and light weapons, and unmanned aerial vehicles.

We are unfortunately obliged to note that armed provocations by the Ukrainian Government continue despite the additional measures that came into effect on 27 July to strengthen the ceasefire regime. Last Saturday, 26 September, the media reported how mortar shelling of militia-controlled areas in the Donetsk region had resulted in a fire that engulfed 15 buildings in the settlement of Dolomitne. We trust that the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine (SMM) will confirm and reflect this information in its reports.

Against this background, one cannot but be outraged by the pronouncements made by a number of Western delegations at the Forum for Security Co-operation (FSC) about the Ukrainian Government's "constructive approach" to the fulfilment of its commitments within the framework of a peaceful settlement and the alleged "restraint" it displays in the military sphere. It is time at long last for our partners to stop closing their eyes to the suffering of the civilian population in Donbas and distorting reality.

As a co-mediator in the peace process, Russia emphasizes that any further prolongation of the violence in eastern Ukraine is unacceptable, and calls on the Ukrainian Government to take a responsible approach to the implementation of the relevant agreements, which once again served to confirm that progress can be made in the settlement process if the political will is forthcoming.

The Ukrainian Government should put an immediate stop to the punitive operation against the civilian population of Donbas, withdraw its weapons and move them to the designated storage sites, disarm all illegal groups, and pull foreign military equipment and mercenaries out of Ukraine. The inhumane socio-economic blockade of Donbas should be lifted and the region itself granted special status as a matter of urgency. All of Ukraine's obligations under the Minsk agreements must be fulfilled. Political and security measures are closely interlinked and should be implemented simultaneously. Without resolving the political issues, a comprehensive settlement of the crisis in Ukraine is impossible. We emphasize the direct responsibility of the Ukrainian Government for the practical implementation of all aspects of the Minsk Package of Measures and the instructions issued at the "Normandy format" summit held in Paris.

Ukraine's contemptuous attitude towards the fulfilment of its commitments under OSCE politico-military instruments is deeply troubling. There is copious evidence of violations by the Ukrainian Government of provisions of the Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security. Military activities are conducted in the south-east of the country that at various times have involved troop strengths in the order of 70,000 personnel along with large quantities of heavy equipment. What is more, the Ukrainian Government does not provide the notifications required by the Vienna Document 2011 and does not invite observers to that area. We would recall that voluntary transparency measures are no substitute for the implementation of mandatory Vienna Document provisions.

Madam Chairperson,

The continuing crisis in Ukraine is the result of the February 2014 coup d'état, which was orchestrated, funded and organized from abroad and has led to the armed confrontation in Donbas and the suffering of millions of Ukrainian civilians. For more than six years now, the Ukrainian Government's Western partners have not really sought to promote a real cessation of hostilities and a political settlement of the crisis. On the contrary, they are in fact giving the Ukrainian Government the green light to commit war crimes in eastern Ukraine and inciting it to further armed violence; they are training the Ukrainian army and beefing it up with weapons and equipment, which then end up in the zone of armed confrontation. Such actions contravene the letter and the spirit of the OSCE Document on Small Arms and Light Weapons; they also run counter to the CSCE Principles Governing Conventional Arms Transfers. We urge our partners to fulfil their obligations fully and responsibly, something they themselves regularly advocate.

We have noticed a provocative increase in the intensity of military flights by NATO States over Ukraine, which must inevitably ratchet up military tensions. In early September, three United States B-52 strategic bombers, operating out of the Royal Air Force base in Fairford, United Kingdom, flew into potential combat zone airspace over the western part of the Sea of Azov. In that connection, it should be emphasized that their flight path crossed the territory of a country that is being torn apart by an internal armed conflict. The destabilizing effect of these actions is obvious.

The apogee of US military flight activity over Ukraine came on 23 September when two B-52H bombers entered its airspace once more; at the same time, the US Embassy in Ukraine cynically exhorted the inhabitants of Kyiv to "come wave" at the US tiltrotor military aircraft (CV-22B Ospreys) overflying the capital. Meanwhile, other US military aircraft (MC-130J tankers) could be seen in the sky over other Ukrainian cities, namely Kherson, Zaporizhia, Dnipro, Poltava and Cherkasy.

One may legitimately ask what the purpose of all this demonstrative sabre-rattling is. And how do these actions square with the pronouncements by the delegation of the United States at the FSC about it being prepared to contribute to the promotion of stability in Ukraine?

We would remind you that participating States that provide military assistance in any form to Ukraine are thereby supporting the "war party" in Kyiv and share responsibility with the Ukrainian military for the casualties among the civilian population and for further destruction in Donbas. We call on the OSCE, our international partners and Ukraine's external "minders" to bring their influence to bear on the Ukrainian leadership in order to induce it to take practical steps in the interests of peace and civil accord with a view to achieving swift implementation of the provisions of the Package of Measures (endorsed by the United Nations Security Council) in a full and co-ordinated manner on the basis of direct and sustainable dialogue between the Ukrainian Government and the authorities in Donetsk and Luhansk.

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

956th Plenary Meeting

FSC Journal No. 962, Agenda item 2

**DECISION No. 4/20
UPDATED BEST PRACTICE GUIDE ON DEACTIVATION OF SMALL
ARMS AND LIGHT WEAPONS**

The Forum for Security Co-operation (FSC),

Fulfilling the mandate given by Ministerial Council Decision No. 10/17 on small arms and light weapons (SALW) and stockpiles of conventional ammunition (SCA), adopted in Vienna in December 2017, and encouraged by the acknowledgement of the 2018 Milan Ministerial Council Declaration on OSCE Efforts in the Field of Norms and Best Practices on SALW and SCA of “the need for the OSCE to continue to enhance its SALW- and SCA-related norms and best practices and their implementation”,

Recognizing the outcomes of the Third United Nations Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, which took place in New York from 18 to 29 June 2018,

Acknowledging that the updated best practice guide could also serve as a guide for national policy-making on the part of participating States and encourage the voluntary implementation of higher common standards of practice among all participating States,

Noting that the updated best practice guide could also be useful to OSCE Partners for Co-operation and other United Nations Member States in their efforts to tackle the risks and challenges caused by reactivated, converted or otherwise illegally modified small arms,

Decides to:

1. Welcome, giving it its full title, the updated Best Practice Guide on Minimum Standards for National Procedures for the Deactivation of Small Arms and Light Weapons, which presents examples of best practices aimed at ensuring that the deactivation of small arms and light weapons renders them permanently inoperable (FSC.DEL/250/17/Rev.4);
2. Endorse the publication of the updated best practice guide in all six OSCE languages and to encourage participating States to make the guide available as appropriate;

3. Task the Conflict Prevention Centre with ensuring the widest possible circulation of the updated best practice guide, including to the OSCE Partners for Co-operation and the United Nations;
4. Request that the updated best practice guide be presented at the Seventh Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects.

This decision supersedes FSC Decision No. 1/18 (FSC.DEC/1/18/Corr.2) on the best practice guide on deactivation of small arms and light weapons dated 21 February 2018.

FSC.DEC/4/20
30 September 2020
Attachment

ENGLISH
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**INTERPRETATIVE STATEMENT UNDER
PARAGRAPH IV.1(A)6 OF THE RULES OF PROCEDURE
OF THE ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY AND
CO-OPERATION IN EUROPE**

By the delegation of the Russian Federation:

“Having joined the consensus regarding the Forum for Security Co-operation (FSC) decision adopted today on the updated best practice guide on deactivation of small arms and light weapons (SALW), the delegation of the Russian Federation feels it necessary to make the following interpretative statement under paragraph IV.1(A)6 of the Rules of Procedure of the OSCE.

In welcoming the adoption of the updated best practice guide on deactivation of SALW, the Russian Federation takes the position that the implementation of this document shall be of a voluntary nature.

We request that this statement be attached to the adopted decision.”