



REPUBLIC OF ALBANIA  
MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

**TALKING POINTS BY MR. GAZMEND TURDIU  
SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF ALBANIA,  
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Working Session III: Revitalizing, updating and modernizing conventional arms control and confidence- and security-building measures: challenges and opportunities

**Thank you Mr. Moderator,  
Distinguished Colleagues,**

Albania joins the other delegations in thanking the US Assistant Secretary of State, Madame Gottemueler, and Ambassador Ulianov for their insightful and thorough keynote interventions. These presentations set the scene for a frank and open discussion on our national positions on today's topics.

During last year's ASRC we noted with pleasure that the idea of refreshing conventional arms control and CSBM's, after a period of prolonged *status-quo*, was quickly gathering momentum. Today the picture is more positive and quite optimistic, which bodes well for possible results in the near future, especially in the field of CSBMs.

For more than a year the FSC has engaged in intensive negotiations with a view to bring the VD99 in line with the present-day realities and the evolving security environment of our continent. This exercise has gained renewed impetus following the Astana Declaration where our Heads of States and Governments looked forward to the updating of the VD99.

6 months after Astana and half way to Vilnius it is imperative that we take a hard look at where the negotiations stand and determine the objectives we want to achieve by the end of this year. Albania is convinced that we should be ambitious and it advocates the adoption of a strategic approach in the process of updating the VD99. For this very reason we were among the first countries to cosponsor the French proposal to lower the thresholds for prior notification of military activities. This proposal has the potential to shift the focus of the VD99 from the cold war to the new security realities of the European Continent. Along with the Russian proposal to notify at least one military activity below thresholds, that Albania fully supports, the French draft, if adopted, could indeed pave the way to substantial and strategic modernization of the VD99.

We are also supportive of the idea to increase military transparency and predictability through increased opportunities for inspections and evaluations as well as by increasing the size of inspection and evaluation teams. We are also aware that this idea, together with the Russian proposal to increase the duration of inspection and evaluation visits, has important financial implications, which small countries are unable to sustain, especially in light of the global economic downturn. We would therefore be inclined to consider these ideas in conjunction with British Proposal to manage costs of inspections and evaluations.

It is our belief that the VD99 needs to be updated so that it can deal effectively with inter-state conflict and crisis situations. Hence, a targeted review of core mechanisms is necessary, including, among others those existing provisions of the Chapter III of the VD99 that pertain to risk reduction. In this connection we are pleased to declare our support for the Dutch Proposal on an “OSCE Inspection for Clarification on Military Activities giving Rise to Concerns”.

Several delegations have put forward draft proposals aimed at technical fine-tunings of the VD 99. We consider them as useful ideas that may help our verifiers during the conduct of inspections and verifications. However, there is need for more political will to embark into a substantial modernization of our CSBMs.

#### **Mr. Moderator**

In parallel with the efforts of the FSC to update and modernize the VD99, 36 OSCE participating states have strived for more than a year to break the CFE deadlock and find common ground on the basic principles for a framework for negotiations. As a party to this process Albania shares the concern with the current state of affairs of the consultation process, which has been halted due to entrenched differences on *host nation consent and the implementation of interim transparency measures*. It is now clear that these 2 issues and other divergences of no less importance constitute the stumbling blocks that will ultimately determine the fate of the framework for negotiations.

Albania is a sincere supporter of the adaptation of a new regime that builds upon the CFE and ACFE *acquis* and includes the principles of limitation, restraint, transparency and verification. The new regime should strongly reaffirm the principle of Host Nation Consent within internationally recognized borders, as a core tenet of European Security and an instrument to address issues of conventional arms control and the security concerns of some participants related to the presence of foreign armed forces in their territory.

On the interim transparency measures, Albania stands ready to exchange detailed military information and receive inspections. We consider them as a confidence building measure that put all parties, including non CFE NATO member states, at a level playing field. In this connection, proposals to exchange information under GEMI and Annual Exchange of Military Information can hardly be accepted since they do not provide for a sufficient level of transparency.

We are confident that if we manage to narrow the gap on these two points, we will certainly be able to agree on a substantial framework for a negotiation, based upon the text already on the table and has been negotiated during the last months.

In conclusion Mr. Moderator, I would like to stress that the stalemate regarding the CFE framework should not condition the ongoing negotiations to reach an updated CSBM regime. The two processes are separate and should be treated as such.

I thank you for your attention.