

Statement by Chairperson of the Forum for Security Cooperation

H.E. Ambassador Gints Apals,

Permanent Representative of the Republic of Latvia,

at the closing of the second working session of the FSC

689th FSC Plenary Meeting, 25 July 2012

Excellences,

Dear Director,

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is my honour to address you at the closing of this year's second working session of the Forum for Security Cooperation under Latvian Chairmanship.

2012 is a remarkable year for our Forum. Some of you certainly remember that exactly 20 years ago, on July 10, 1992, the FSC was established at the Helsinki Summit. The first meeting of the FSC took place on 22 September 1992 - something to keep in mind when we resume FSC work this autumn.

Dear Colleagues,

The purpose of my statement is to highlight the key issues and events that we have addressed and advanced over this period. Let me recall the opening speech of the State Secretary of the Foreign Ministry of Latvia on April 25, in which he described our approach through a roadmap. Indeed, as we look back, during the last three months the FSC has covered major aspects of this roadmap quite extensively.

We have put an emphasis on **Security dialogue** which is at the heart of the Forum and constitutes possibly even the most important tool in the politico- military dimension of the OSCE. We believe that it has given new impulses for better understanding each other and, more concretely, advancing FSC work towards the Ministerial Council in Dublin.

By contributing to the OSCE work on transnational threats and strengthening its engagement with **Afghanistan**, the FSC, jointly with the Permanent Council, discussed the transition aspects of Afghanistan. It was extremely important not only for the participating States but also for our partners for cooperation since it touched the issues of comprehensive security and the complex nature of capacity building, as well as security and stability in the region.

The Forum held discussions on ways of improving the security and stability in the OSCE area. With the kind assistance of the Geneva Centre for Security Policy and the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office we took a strategic view on **security environment in the 21st century**. A senior US State Department official presented

American views on **missile defence** and related issues. It invoked lively discussions highlighted some differences in threat perception and analysis in the audience.

Since the participating States are actively conducting their defence sector reforms and restructuring armed forces that has also financial implications, the Chairmanship paid due attention to transparency, openness and trust. The United States briefed us on its defence strategy; the United Kingdom outlined its vision on defence development until 2020. We discussed EU approach to civilian crisis management and on-going EU operations, putting this subject in a wider context and considering also the OSCE response capabilities.

These aspects inevitably brought the FSC to the issue of **protracted conflicts**, which continues to be an integral part of our Security dialogue and the policy agenda of the OSCE as a whole. The Latvian Chairmanship was a strong advocate of the principle that the FSC should remain a place, where all political military issues of concern to any participating State could be raised and discussed. We are glad to note the general understanding, that it strengthens the importance and credibility of our forum and work we are doing. To this end, just a week ago we had a privilege of listening to the Deputy Foreign Minister of the Republic of Armenia who addressed issues pertinent to security policy of his country in the context of current developments in the region.

Colleagues,

Let me turn to the OSCE **Code of Conduct** on political military aspects of security. The Chairmanship conducted two events in order to prepare the ground for the first-ever Annual discussion on the implementation of the Code. As you remember, we started with a security dialogue on democratic control over armed forces, which was comprehensively addressed by a representative of the German Bundestag. Second, it was both an honour and a pleasure to host the regional seminar on political military aspects of security of the Code of Conduct in Riga. Participants of this seminar reviewed the implementation of the Code in the Baltic Sea region. The Annual discussion itself brought up new ideas, for example, in security sector reform, promoting outreach of the principles of the Code of Conduct and considering future approaches to the implementation of the Code. The **UN SC Resolution 1325** was identified as a missing aspect in the Code of Conduct. This is an issue we should continue working with in the future.

The Chairmanship put a special emphasis on the significant contribution of the OSCE in implementing the **United Nations Security Council Resolution 1540**. All of us can be proud of OSCE assistance to individual countries developing their National Plans of Action in implementation of the UNSCR 1540. The Republic of Belarus and the Republic of Serbia have recently developed and adopted their plans of action. Following their presentations the FSC had a vivid discussion on future role of the OSCE in this area as outlined in the Athens Ministerial Council Declaration on Non-proliferation and reaffirmed by Vilnius Ministerial Council Decision 8/11. It is essential to find ways to sustain and improve the work of the FSC, which has commenced so successfully.

Latvian Chairmanship took non-proliferation issues as one of priorities for the FSC and in this regard appointed the FSC Chairperson's co-ordinator on non-

proliferation issues. We are fully convinced that it will facilitate and advance the implementation of the Vilnius Ministerial Council Decisions No. 07/11 and 08/11 in relation to non-proliferation issues.

Dear colleagues,

SALW issues dominated the FSC agenda in late May when we organized two events: 1) the meeting to review implementation of the OSCE Plan of Action on SALW and 2) Expert level meeting on stockpile management, surplus reduction and destruction of small arms and light weapons. Both events were well attended by experts, high level speakers, representatives from other international organisations and representatives from the capitals.

The review meeting and expert level session showed that substantial results have been achieved in a number of areas; however, it also demonstrated the need for further efforts to improve the implementation of norms, measures and principles agreed in the Plan of Action. In this regard, let me remind delegations that in its statement of July 4 the FSC Chairperson proposed to improve the implementation of the Plan of Action by issuing an FSC working programme on SALW. This working programme would be a living document that should further operationalize the measures stated in the Plan of Action on SALW. The programme would reflect the suggestions from the SALW meetings and the results of the UN 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. The Conference will take place from 27 August to 9 September 2012, in New York, where the FSC Chairperson will have a privilege to present the OSCE activities, efforts and endeavours in this area.

In order to advance the full implementation of agreed commitments the FSC adopted the Decision nr. 3/12 dated 20 June 2012. On that basis the FSC has reissued the OSCE Document on SALW consolidating all relevant decisions that have been taken since the adoption of the initial Document in year 2000. Having the extensive OSCE SALW documentation in a single instrument will facilitate its implementation by policy-makers in our capitals.

Dear colleagues,

Since the beginning of the year we went through a turbulent period while internal legal requirements delayed the appropriate implementation of the Vienna Document 2011.

Nevertheless, we have used this time actively to enrich the agenda of the working group "A" and reflect, discuss and review the **Vienna Document** proposals on the table, such as, on lowering thresholds, prior notification of major military activities, and on notification of permanent changes in the command organization of military forces. We have welcomed with appreciation the new Vienna document proposals: first, on including selected non-combat units in the Annual Exchange of Military Information proposed by Germany; second - a draft decision on reporting of military expenditures.

We note with appreciation that there has been a number of informal consultations and stocktaking on the above mentioned proposals. Currently, at least two revisions of these proposals are on their way.

It goes without saying that confidence and security building measures serve us as a toolbox for strengthening of security. In order to fulfil its purpose properly and effectively, everybody needs to be on board in that exercise.

Following the suggestions from the participating States we have actively started the preparations for the next Annual Implementation Assessment Meeting in 2013 by revising and putting some flexibility in the agenda. There is also a proposal for a meeting of the Heads of Verification Centres in 2012. We are confident that an early adoption of these decisions is in our common interest.

The **ASRC** was a significant event during this trimester. This year it was enriched by the Security Days organized by the Secretary General. The FSC working session, as usual, was devoted to arms control and confidence and security building measures.

It was acknowledged that the participating States are facing difficulties in making serious progress on updating the Vienna Document. There is also a lack of proper implementation of other politico-military mechanisms that have been functioning effectively for many years, like the Treaty on Open Skies. In addition, the situation around the Treaty on Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE) remains static.

What could be done? It was a common view that further progress needs to be evolutionary and will require time, patience and respect for different national positions. It was also pointed out that the key to success is political will that is in short supply for the time being.

Finally, as we approached the end of July, the **issue of Mongolian accession to the OSCE** appeared high on the agenda of the FSC and organization as a whole. While it was widely acknowledged that no FSC decision would be required to reaffirm the *status quo vis-à-vis* the zone of application of confidence and security building measures, the uncertainty still remains about next procedural steps.

Thank you for excellent cooperation!