

Chairmanship: Austria

995th PLENARY MEETING OF THE FORUM

1. Date: Wednesday, 8 December 2021 (in the Neuer Saal and via video teleconference)

Opened: 10 a.m.

Closed: 1.15 p.m.

2. Chairperson: Ambassador F. Raunig

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

Agenda item 1: DISCUSSION ON THE OUTCOMES OF THE
28th MINISTERIAL COUNCIL MEETING IN
STOCKHOLM

Chairperson, Slovenia-European Union (with the candidate countries Albania, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia; the country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate country Bosnia and Herzegovina; the European Free Trade Association countries Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway, members of the European Economic Area; as well as Georgia and Ukraine, in alignment) (FSC.DEL/433/21), Sweden (Annex 1), United States of America (Annex 2), United Kingdom, Canada, Switzerland (FSC.DEL/435/21 OSCE+), Azerbaijan, Turkey, Russian Federation (Annex 3)

Agenda item 2: GENERAL STATEMENTS

Situation in and around Ukraine: Ukraine (FSC.DEL/431/21 OSCE+), Slovenia-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 Georgia and Ukraine, in alignment) (FSC.DEL/434/21), United States of America (FSC.DEL/430/21 OSCE+), United Kingdom (FSC.DEL/432/21 OSCE+), Canada, Russian Federation (Annex 4), Romania

Agenda item 3: AWARD CEREMONY FOR THE 2021 ESSAY
 COMPETITION ON CONVENTIONAL ARMS CONTROL
 AND CONFIDENCE- AND SECURITY-BUILDING
 MEASURES ORGANIZED JOINTLY BY THE OSCE AND
 THE INSTITUTE FOR PEACE RESEARCH AND
 SECURITY POLICY AT THE UNIVERSITY OF
 HAMBURG

Chairperson, Director of the Conflict Prevention Centre, Mr. C. Friesendorf,
Mr. A. Zagorski, Mr. N. Sokov, Mr. F. Tanner, Mr. M. Finaud, Mr. U. Kühn,
Ms. A. Nadibaidze, Mr. N. Miotto, Ms. C. Ditel, Slovenia-European Union,
Italy (Annex 5)

Agenda item 4: ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- (a) *Announcing and Reminding Mechanism pursuant to FSC Decision No. 10/02:*
Chairperson
- (b) *Meeting of the Informal Group of Friends on Small Arms and Light Weapons
and Stockpiles of Conventional Ammunition, to be held via video
teleconference on 9 December 2021:* Chairperson of the Informal Group of
Friends on Small Arms and Light Weapons and Stockpiles of Conventional
Ammunition (Latvia)
- (c) *2021 OSCE-UNODA Scholarship for Peace and Security training programme
for young professionals, the majority being women:* Representative of the
Conflict Prevention Centre (Annex 6)
- (d) *Financial contribution to the Information Management and Reporting System
(iMARS) project:* Portugal
- (e) *19th annual consultations on the review of implementation of the Document
on Confidence- and Security-Building Measures in the Naval Field in the
Black Sea, to be held via video teleconference on 9 December 2021:* Russian
Federation
- (f) *Decision of the Council of the European Union in support of the
comprehensive programme on supporting efforts to prevent and combat illicit
trafficking of small arms and light weapons and conventional ammunition in
South-Eastern Europe, adopted on 2 December 2021:* Slovenia-European
Union
- (g) *Update on SALW and SCA projects in the OSCE area:* Belgium, France,
Montenegro, FSC Co-ordinator for Assistance Projects on SALW and SCA
(Austria), Representative of the Conflict Prevention Centre, Switzerland

4. Next meeting:

Wednesday, 15 December 2021, at 11 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/1001
8 December 2021
Annex 1

Original: ENGLISH

995th Plenary Meeting

FSC Journal No. 1001, Agenda item 1

**STATEMENT BY
THE DELEGATION OF SWEDEN**

Sweden fully aligns itself with the statement of the European Union, but wishes to make the following statement in its capacity as holder of the OSCE Chairmanship.

Mr. Chairperson,
Dear colleagues,

Let me begin by extending Sweden's sincere thanks to all participating States and partners who participated in the Ministerial Council meeting in Stockholm. The gathering met our high expectations and we especially appreciated the high-level presence, which gave us the pleasure of welcoming almost fifty ministers for foreign affairs, a record participation in recent years. We see this as reflecting the importance of our organization and as showing the high level of commitment to the OSCE. It also reflects the fact that all participating States are aware of the many and dire challenges we currently face.

The Secretary General's briefing clearly showed that, despite the challenges we face, the OSCE can deliver and have an impact when it has the right mandate and tools to do so. This fact is sometimes overshadowed by the topics we tend to discuss week after week, and it should be highlighted more often.

But at the same time, the meeting underlined the real importance of keeping our dialogue going, of meeting in person to tackle crises and challenges, and to explore where we can agree and where we must agree to disagree. In this function, namely, that of gathering so many States around one table, the OSCE is truly irreplaceable. We believe that the Stockholm Ministerial Council played its part in this respect, though this would not have been possible without an active willingness on the part of all participants to discuss the challenges facing us at this time.

All in all, we are therefore pleased with the Ministerial Council as it turned out, and we trust that we were able to facilitate true and honest discussions on a variety of topics. The fact that we were able to finish text negotiations before the Ministerial Council was from our point of view crucial. We are firmly convinced that by doing so we were able to create an environment for deeper dialogue for the good of our common security.

Mr. Chairperson,

We applaud the fact that a decision was reached on strengthened co-operation to address the challenges caused by climate change, an area which is one of the defining challenges of our times. We also agreed on an important statement on the negotiations in the Transdnestrian settlement process.

However, considering the time and effort spent on negotiating, redrafting and developing a total of 21 texts, it must be admitted that this was a meagre outcome – though quality is of course more important than quantity, as we have always said.

The Ministerial Council was preceded by extensive negotiations in the Forum for Security Co-operation on four texts, all of which we consider would have been of great value for the OSCE as an organization and within the Forum for Security Co-operation's field of work in particular. I wish to take this opportunity to thank Austria not only for bringing three of these texts to the table in its national capacity, but also for the joint effort together with Sweden on one of them. We have greatly appreciated the open and constructive co-operation between our delegations.

Unfortunately, we were not able to reach consensus on any of these texts, which we deeply regret. Given that Sweden as Chairmanship would have welcomed all the proposed texts and their important commitments, allow me to make a few remarks on two of them.

A decision on additional military-to-military dialogue would have been extremely useful in these times of distrust and lack of military contacts. We find it hard to comprehend that there were attempts made to change the text's original purpose – to increase the number of doctrine seminars – and to focus instead on military-to-military expert meetings. Expert meetings are certainly important, but if this had been the real intention, it would have been more appropriate to put another specific text on the table.

Also, we already have forums for military experts to meet and engage in discussion – one being the Forum for Security Co-operation in which we meet week by week, which presents an excellent platform for military dialogue on a variety of politico-military issues.

The Structured Dialogue also has working groups at the military expert level specifically dedicated to this topic. In the future, we would welcome greater active participation from capitals in Structured Dialogue meetings.

Regarding the text on women in armed forces, we are disappointed to find that in the year 2021 we cannot agree on a text that emphasizes the basic rights and freedoms of women when they are serving in armed forces. We must acknowledge that women still experience a number of obstacles that men do not, and that it is time to do something about it. This is not only about human rights – by doing too little in this field, we also waste resources, knowledge and competence. The ability of women to serve to their full potential would strengthen the military tool as such and would benefit many aspects of the OSCE's work. This should be of interest for us all, so let us seek to advance these efforts next year.

Thank you. Mr. Chairperson, I kindly ask you to attach this statement to the journal of the day.



995th Plenary Meeting
FSC Journal No. 1001, Agenda item 1

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

Mr. Chairperson,

The United States deeply regrets the lack of consensus on the four draft texts that were painstakingly negotiated in Working Group B. We must underscore that this bears no reflection on the Chairmanship, as you expended every possible effort to propose fair compromises, at times making us all equally unhappy, as is the nature of consensus, and indeed of multilateralism writ large. For our part, Mr. Chairperson, the United States was prepared to be unhappy. We showed maximum flexibility in the interest of compromise and with the understanding that collective security encompasses the security concerns of all 57 participating States, not just that of one. We are not expecting that anyone betray their national interest, but nor can one participating State dictate the interests of 57.

To recap, we would have been gratified to mark the 25th anniversary of the Lisbon Framework for Arms Control with a declaration endorsing the work of this Forum. It is sad that we could not all reach consensus on endorsing the full implementation and reinvigoration of our core OSCE politico-military commitments, including the Vienna Document. We acknowledge that our inability to mark the 25th anniversary of the Lisbon Framework for Arms Control with a declaration endorsing the work of this Forum is a reflection of our deteriorating security environment and an indication of the need to build a more positive environment and were prepared to say so. We were also ready to fully reaffirm the Hamburg mandate of the Structured Dialogue.

We would have also been gratified to endorse periodic military dialogues in between the High-Level Military Doctrine Seminars to build on the Vienna Document. Such dialogues would have provided opportunities for military-to-military contacts and exchanges, including on doctrines. However, Russia's insistence on dictating the agenda for such dialogues – insisting that they be about de-escalation with NATO – was disingenuous and clearly could not command consensus.

Let me be clear, we are all for de-escalation. Here in this Forum, we have a key tool for de-escalation at our disposal: the Vienna Document. It is the most effective tool we have for risk reduction and military transparency. Let us start there by fully implementing the Vienna Document, and by working together on ways to make it even more effective in today's security environment. That would be a critical first step for de-escalation. Rather than

warning about “nightmarish scenarios” of its own making, Russia can take this critical step to de-escalate.

In this regard, we were proud to be among 46 participating States making a joint statement on modernizing the Vienna Document. We repeat the call in that statement to “encourage all participating States to engage in constructive discussions focused on the Vienna Document’s role in reducing the risks of conflict in the OSCE area by promoting transparency, predictability and stability.”

We further regret that a decision on small arms and light weapons (SALW) did not achieve consensus for a second year. Politicizing our important work in this field is unacceptable. We were proud to be among 50 participating States making a joint statement acknowledging the work of the OSCE to mitigate the threats emanating from the illicit trafficking in and destabilizing accumulation of small arms and light weapons and stockpiles of conventional ammunition (SCA). Rest assured the United States will continue to support and champion our SALW/SCA efforts.

Finally, we are deeply saddened that a draft decision to ensure equal opportunities and full and meaningful participation of women in the armed forces also failed to achieve consensus in this Forum. This frankly was a disservice to all the servicewomen who have committed to fight and defend our countries. Again, we were proud to join a joint statement by 53 participating States affirming the centrality of women, peace and security, and gender equality in our joint work at the OSCE – and yes, that would include the work of the Forum for Security Co-operation as a constituent body of the Organization.

Mr. Chairperson, allow me to conclude by again acknowledging all your work and that of your team – you spared no effort in trying to reach consensus on these statements. We regret that for a second year, such consensus was lacking in this Forum. We will continue to strive for it, in the interest of the collective security of all 57 participating States around this table.

Thank you, Mr. 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/1001
8 December 2021
Annex 3

ENGLISH
Original: RUSSIAN

995th Plenary Meeting
FSC Journal No. 1001, Agenda item 1

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

Mr. Chairperson,

Allow us, too, to add our statement to those of the distinguished delegations that have expressed their profound gratitude to the Austrian Chairmanship for the work it performed in preparing the Forum's contribution to the OSCE Ministerial Council meeting in Stockholm. We have had difficult challenges to face up to. We note with satisfaction the high diplomatic prowess of our Austrian colleagues, and their professionalism, flexibility and skilfulness in exploiting all possibilities for finding compromise language.

We regret that, despite the great efforts made, it has not proved possible this year to achieve tangible results within the Forum for Security Co-operation (FSC) in our work on the four draft documents. Of course, reaching consensus requires that the positions of all participating States without exception be taken into account. It is essential, though, to display political realism in that respect. The OSCE does not exist in a vacuum: in many ways it mirrors the highly complex politico-military divergences in Europe. In these circumstances, we believe that the contribution prepared at the FSC for the Ministerial Council meeting should have epitomized the efforts by the participating States to reduce tensions on the continent. This was unfortunately not the case.

The draft decision on military-to-military contacts in the OSCE area would have been acceptable to us only if it had been possible to direct it towards fulfilment of the tasks of de-escalating the situation in Europe and improving relations between the participating States by promoting greater openness and ensuring transparency in military activities. Discussions on issues of military doctrine are undoubtedly useful to a certain extent, but in view of their academic nature they do little to normalize the situation. Moreover, the meetings that have taken place this year within the framework of the FSC and the Structured Dialogue have shown that key OSCE countries evade presenting and discussing their doctrines. They engage, instead, in groundless criticism of non-existent provisions of Russian doctrine, such as "escalating to de-escalate".

Our country sets great store by the Lisbon Framework for Arms Control. We are convinced that this fundamental document could still serve as a moral compass for the participating States in developing an updated or new conventional arms control system. In

this 25th anniversary year of the signing of the Framework, we pay tribute to our predecessors who made a significant contribution to its drafting. That being said, the Russian delegation was unable to support the final draft of the anniversary declaration, since it is categorically opposed to the incorporation in it of any kind of wording that has to do with updating confidence- and security-building measures. Unless the North Atlantic Alliance abandons its policy of “containing” Russia, we see no point in modernizing the Vienna Document 2011.

The draft decision on equal opportunities for women in the army, which was nominally linked to the OSCE Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security, in fact went far beyond the Code’s scope and opened up the possibility of external interference in the day-to-day activities of the armed forces. There is no basis for that either at the international level or in the participating States’ legislation; moreover, it is contrary to the principle of respect for sovereignty. We will in future counter any attempts to drag the women, peace and security agenda into the politico-military decisions of the Ministerial Council and resist proposals to incorporate women-related provisions – not to mention gender-related ones – that would go beyond previously adopted wording.

We attach great importance to co-operation within the OSCE framework on issues pertaining to small arms and light weapons (SALW) and stockpiles of conventional ammunition (SCA). We continue to believe that the implementation of assistance projects, the work on updating best practices and the development of new OSCE documents on SALW and SCA contribute to the global efforts of the United Nations to prevent illicit arms trafficking. It would not be amiss to recall that, over the years, the OSCE Ministerial Council has adopted around twenty declarations and decisions dealing with SALW and SCA. We trust that the participating States will have many opportunities yet to add documents on this topic to the *acquis* of Ministerial Council meetings.

Mr. Chairperson,

In closing, we should like to note that the discussions held as part of the Forum’s preparation for the Ministerial Council meeting were useful. We consider it essential to make use of their potential to give a boost to the activities of our autonomous decision-making body next year, with an emphasis on strengthening the Forum’s politico-military foundations and fostering dialogue so as to dispel the climate of mistrust and confrontation.

On a separate note, I would point out that we are not impressed by the hysterical antics of the “Anglo-Saxon trio” and the EU delegation. We will judge their readiness to engage in dialogue on the basis of the specific actions of the representatives of the participating States and integration association in question, and not their words.

We should like to thank the Swedish OSCE Chairmanship for the excellent organization and conduct of the Ministerial Council meeting, and also for its cordial hospitality. We express our gratitude to Austria and all the delegations together with whom we have completed this tough marathon of negotiations.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson. I request 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/1001
8 December 2021
Annex 4

ENGLISH
Original: RUSSIAN

995th Plenary Meeting
FSC Journal No. 1001, Agenda item 2

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

Mr. Chairperson,

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. For our part, we are doing everything possible to restore peace in Donbas and protect the region's civilian population.

Since the last discussion for the current year of the politico-military aspects of the situation in Ukraine is taking place in the Forum for Security Co-operation (FSC) today, we propose to use the opportunity to take stock of the discussions that have been held.

First of all, the Ukrainian authorities' course of dismantling the Minsk process and effectively abandoning attempts to resolve the conflict in Donbas by peaceful means continues to give rise to serious concern. The Ukrainian Government sent 125,000 soldiers and officers to Donbas at the start of December. That is practically half of the Ukrainian army. Even so, the Ukrainian Government has, as before, failed to provide the notifications required under the Vienna Document 2011 and has not invited observers to the area where the "Joint Forces Operation" is being conducted. Ukraine's Western handlers, who describe themselves as advocates of transparency in the military sphere, remain silent. In doing so, they discredit the Vienna Document as a tool for building trust among the participating States.

Secondly, according to information from the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine (SMM), ceasefire violations are being recorded along the entire line of contact. In recent weeks, the number of violations has repeatedly exceeded the peak figures recorded by the Mission prior to the entry into force of the ceasefire-strengthening measures of 22 July 2020. Heavy weapons prohibited under the Minsk agreements are being used. The vast majority of the destruction of residential buildings and civilian infrastructure confirmed by the SMM has occurred in certain areas of Donbas. We are talking about the long-suffering population of the region that has been on the brink of a catastrophe for almost eight years.

The Ukrainian Government's Western handlers, who describe themselves as human rights advocates, remain silent.

Thirdly, we can see that at a time when there is civil war going on in Donbas and civilians are suffering and dying as a result of the Ukrainian Government's military adventures, the NATO countries are systematically and aggressively "bolstering their position" in Ukraine. Let me cite just a few facts. Recently there have been statements from Western capitals about their readiness to "dispatch" military contingents to Ukraine. The UK Government announced its intention to send up to 600 British troops there. A day earlier, the United States of America unloaded 60 tonnes of ammunition near the borders of Donbas and continues to supply Stinger man-portable air defence systems and Javelin anti-tank missile systems, which are purportedly being used by the Ukrainian military in the zone of confrontation. We note with regret that the Western handlers have managed to abet the Ukrainian Government in its crimes against civilians and to encourage violations of paragraph 10 of the Minsk Package of Measures on the withdrawal of foreign armed formations and military equipment from the territory of Ukraine.

Fourthly, since the end of March, an unending stream of unsubstantiated accusations about "unusual military activities" and "preparations for aggression" against Ukraine have been levelled at our country in the FSC. We heard them in April, May, June, July, August, September and so forth. What is more, these accusations have come, for the most part, from the Western countries that are massing troops and equipment at our borders. The United States has even "surrounded" us on all sides with its military bases.

We urge that it be clearly understood once and for all: we have no plans to "invade" Ukraine. The Western capitals, which know how to analyse the relevant intelligence indicators, are well aware of this. We call emphatically for an end to the aggressive campaign of disinformation, which is leading to an escalation of tension. It is our sovereign right for Russian Federation troops to be active on our national territory.

It is clear to us that the anti-Russian hysteria being whipped up by the Ukrainian Government's Western handlers is simply a diversionary tactic, an artificially created pretext for "getting settled" further in Ukraine militarily. This is fraught with serious negative consequences.

Fifthly, the security situation in the Black Sea region is under grave strain. US destroyers with Tomahawk cruise missiles and Aegis missile defence systems on board are already firmly "established" off the Black Seas coast. They have been deployed for a total of 413 days, an increase of 15 per cent compared with last year. Risks of dangerous incidents involving civilian vessels are increasing. On 3 December, pure luck prevented an accident involving a US CL600 reconnaissance aircraft, which flew close to an Aeroflot A333 in the airspace over the Black Sea. What other dangerous situation needs to occur for NATO to realize that concrete steps must be taken to avert incidents over the Black Sea? We urge States from outside the region to reflect on the fact that their increased provocative activity in the Black Sea region under the ostensible pretext of "defending Ukraine" is leading to further destabilization of the politico-military situation on the continent.

Mr. Chairperson,

The Russian Federation has consistently maintained that a military clash in Europe is unacceptable. In that context, during yesterday's conversation with US President Joe Biden, Russian President Vladimir Putin stressed that our country is interested in obtaining reliable, legally enshrined guarantees that would rule out the eastward expansion of NATO and the deployment of offensive strike weapons systems in States adjacent to Russia, including Ukraine. Crossing this "red line" would have concrete consequences.

Mr. Chairperson,

A cursory review of the situation in and around Ukraine only confirms that our Western partners have done nothing this year to push the Ukrainian Government towards a peaceful resolution of the internal Ukrainian conflict. They have equipped Ukraine with "hardware", played along with anti-Russian propaganda (and perhaps even initiated it), and condoned the Ukrainian authorities' unwillingness to implement the Minsk agreements. Obviously, it is the overlords that need to be talked to, not their vassals.

We therefore call on them to abandon their destabilizing activities and to send a clear signal to the Ukrainian Government that it is unacceptable to revise the Minsk agreements, which are the sole framework for a peaceful settlement. The internal Ukrainian crisis will not be overcome as long as the regime in Kyiv balks at fulfilling its obligations under international law, at engaging in direct dialogue with the authorities in Donetsk and Luhansk and at granting these territories a special status enshrined in the Constitution. This is exactly what they should be using their energy for instead of encouraging anti-Russian sentiment and belligerent acts in our border region.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson. I request 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/1001
8 December 2021
Annex 5

ENGLISH
Original: ITALIAN

995th Plenary Meeting
FSC Journal No. 1001, Agenda item 3

**STATEMENT BY
THE DELEGATION OF ITALY**

Italy wishes to congratulate all the finalists in the 2021 essay competition on conventional arms control and confidence- and security-building measures.

In particular, Italy takes great pride in the fact that two of the three finalists are Italians.

It is also very encouraging to know that young people are devoting themselves in their studies to the field of arms control. They are our guarantee that this important subject will be kept alive in the future – we therefore express our profound appreciation and wish them all the best for a brilliant career.



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

FSC.JOUR/1001
8 December 2021
Annex 6

Original: ENGLISH

995th Plenary Meeting

FSC Journal No. 1001, Agenda item 4(c)

**STATEMENT BY
THE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE
CONFLICT PREVENTION CENTRE**

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.
Excellencies,
Dear colleagues,

Allow me to inform you on a few developments surrounding the extrabudgetary project known as the OSCE-UNODA Scholarship for Peace and Security training programme for young professionals, which is particularly aimed at young women.

Recognizing the under-representation of women and youth in security sector, 2021 marks the fourth year when we (the OSCE) organize, jointly with the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs; an educational programme for young professionals from all across the OSCE area and the countries of our Partners for Co-operation. Earlier this year, some 120 young scholars (90 per cent of whom were female) successfully completed the eight-week online portion of the programme, which was an inquiry-based course on conflict prevention and resolution through arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation. This took place at the modern and interactive OSCE e-learning platform.

Moreover, as a capstone to this programme, 50 female young professionals from 39 OSCE participating States and 8 from our Partners for Co-operation were selected and invited to Vienna for a one week, in-depth, in-person course, which was envisaged as taking place this week, from 6 to 10 December. As in previous years, this portion of the course was intended to be an occasion for networking, interacting with international organizations in this field, and further development of practical skills and in-depth knowledge on conflict prevention and resolution, with gender perspectives in mind.

Regrettably, as I think you are all prepared to hear it, I must inform you that, due to the COVID-19 related lockdown in Austria, the course could not take place as envisaged nor in the envisaged timeframe. Under such circumstances, it was impossible to hold the event in a safe and proper manner. This difficult decision was taken in consultation with the donors to the project as well as the respective structures in the OSCE Secretariat and our other stakeholders.

We are looking forward to 2022 and the next iteration of the training programme, the Scholarship, to which another generation of young professionals from the OSCE participating States and Partners will be invited to apply. However, as we move forward, we do not want to leave this year's scholars behind. Providing that financial resources are available and the COVID-19 safety measures allow for it, we intend to re-invite selected 2021 participants for in-person training once this becomes possible.

With that in mind, I encourage participating States to provide financial contributions to this important initiative, which directly supports the implementation of the women, peace and security agenda. Every contribution brings us closer to the aim of closing gaps both in gender and age in the field of arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation in the OSCE area and in decision-making processes related to these fields on all levels.

On this occasion, allow me, on behalf of the Conflict Prevention Centre, to express my gratitude to the governments contributing to this initiative, namely, those of Andorra, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Spain, Switzerland and the United States of America. I thank them for their generous contributions and support in this endeavour and look forward to their continued support in the years to come. I also thank colleagues from our partner organizations, in particular the UNODA, and the OSCE structures for their co-operation in contributing to the 2021 edition.

Thank you very much for your attention and I kindly ask that this statement be attached to the journal of the day.