

Chairmanship: Austria**984th PLENARY MEETING OF THE FORUM**

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

Opened: 11.05 a.m.

Closed: 1.25 p.m.

2. Chairperson: Ambassador F. Raunig

The Chairperson reminded the Forum for Security Co-operation (FSC) of the technical modalities for the conduct of FSC meetings during the COVID-19 pandemic.

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

Agenda item 1: **OPENING SESSION: STATEMENT BY
H.E. MR. P. LAUNSKY, SECRETARY-GENERAL FOR
FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE REPUBLIC OF AUSTRIA**

Chairperson, Secretary-General for Foreign Affairs of Austria (FSC.DEL/303/21 OSCE+), United States of America (FSC.DEL/301/21/Rev.1 OSCE+), Slovenia-European Union (with the candidate countries Albania, Montenegro and North Macedonia; the European Free Trade Association country Iceland, member of the European Economic Area; as well as Andorra, Georgia, Moldova, San Marino and Ukraine, in alignment) (FSC.DEL/313/21), Permanent Representative of Germany (also on behalf of the Permanent Representatives of Andorra, Bulgaria, Canada, Cyprus, France, Georgia, Iceland, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Malta, Mongolia, Norway, Romania, San Marino, Serbia, Slovenia, Sweden, Turkey, the United States of America and the European Union) (Annex 1), United Kingdom (FSC.DEL/299/21 OSCE+), Switzerland (Annex 2), Canada, Turkey (Annex 3), Azerbaijan (FSC.DEL/297/21 OSCE+), Belarus (FSC.DEL/298/21 OSCE+), Sweden (Annex 4), Liechtenstein (FSC.DEL/296/21 OSCE+), Norway (FSC.DEL/316/21), Ukraine (FSC.DEL/304/21), Armenia (Annex 5), Georgia (FSC.DEL/314/21 OSCE+), Bosnia and Herzegovina, Russian Federation (Annex 6), OSCE Parliamentary Assembly

Agenda item 2: GENERAL STATEMENTS

None

Agenda item 3: ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- (a) *Introduction of the members of the Austrian FSC Chairmanship team:*
Chairperson
- (b) *Military exercises conducted in the Russian Federation in August and September 2021:* Russian Federation (FSC.DEL/308/21)
- (c) *Military exercise “Zapad-2021”, to be conducted from 10 to 16 September 2021:* Russian Federation (FSC.DEL/307/21), Ukraine, United States of America (FSC.DEL/310/21), Canada, United Kingdom, Belarus (FSC.DEL/300/21 OSCE+)
- (d) *Military exercise “Silver Arrow 2021”, to be conducted from 4 to 19 September 2021:* Latvia (FSC.DEL/302/21 OSCE+)

4. Next meeting:

Wednesday, 15 September 2021, 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/990
8 September 2021
Annex 1

Original: ENGLISH

984th Plenary Meeting
FSC Journal No. 990, Agenda item 1

**STATEMENT BY
THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF GERMANY
(ALSO ON BEHALF OF THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVES OF
ANDORRA, BULGARIA, CANADA, CYPRUS, FRANCE, GEORGIA,
ICELAND, LATVIA, LIECHTENSTEIN, MALTA, MONGOLIA,
NORWAY, ROMANIA, SAN MARINO, SERBIA, SLOVENIA,
SWEDEN, TURKEY, THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
AND THE EUROPEAN UNION)**

Secretary-General Launsky-Tieffenthal,
Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,

I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the current women ambassadors and representatives to the OSCE of: Andorra, Bulgaria, Canada, Cyprus, the European Union, France, Georgia, Iceland, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Malta, Mongolia, Norway, Romania, San Marino, Serbia, Slovenia, Sweden, Turkey, the United States of America and my own country, Germany.

We warmly welcome Austria as holder of the new FSC Chairmanship and are looking forward to engaging in constructive and fruitful discussions on the women, peace and security agenda in the Forum, not least in the lead-up to the Ministerial Council in Stockholm.

Twenty-one years after its adoption, United Nations Security Council resolution 1325 remains the landmark document for promoting a gender perspective in international peace and security. It is undeniable: sustainable peace and stability are not possible without the full, equal and meaningful participation and representation of women, including at all stages of conflict prevention, peace negotiations and peacebuilding processes. This is relevant for all levels of decision-making and leadership.

Last year, at the Ministerial Council in Tirana, 52 participating States issued a joint statement on United Nations Security Council resolution 1325. This statement not only underscored the critical role of women in matters of peace and security but also outlined necessary steps for the promotion and further implementation of the women, peace and security agenda within the OSCE.

Already in 1999, at the OSCE Istanbul Summit, the heads of State or government of the OSCE participating States declared their commitment to making gender equality an integral part of their policies, both at the level of their States and within our Organization.

Our commitment is unwavering. We call upon the participating States that were not party to the Tirana Joint Statement on UNSCR 1325 to join us on the pathway towards gender equality and a more peaceful future.

While there has certainly been progress already with regard to achieving these goals in the OSCE, a lot of work still lies ahead of us on the road to equality and non-discrimination. Furthermore, unfortunately, we have also seen retrogressive developments within the OSCE area.

In terms of the comprehensive security approach of the OSCE, it is of key importance that we advance the implementation of the women, peace and security agenda throughout all three dimensions and all bodies and instruments of our Organization. With regard to the first dimension, a variety of specific measures can and should be taken in order to honour our commitments. The Tirana Joint Statement has put concrete ideas on the table, on which we can base our next steps. The FSC plays a key part in this endeavour.

In this context, the Women in the First Dimension Network is also contributing to empowering and enhancing the visibility of women professionals in the first dimension and is serving as a networking platform. We especially welcome the Women in the First Dimension Network's mentoring programme piloted earlier this year, which as a practically oriented initiative can benefit all delegations here in Vienna.

Given the variety of topics and measures related to the women, peace and security agenda to be discussed in the FSC, we would consider it appropriate to have a special FSC session dedicated to United Nations Security Council resolution 1325 and women, peace and security.

Today, we are facing new and even more complex security challenges and threats. At the same time, protracted and armed conflicts continue to adversely affect civilians, in particular women and girls. The recent developments in Afghanistan, which give us grave cause for concern, have yet again demonstrated that progress on women's and girls' rights cannot be taken for granted, and that we all have to continue our efforts for the empowerment and protection of women and girls, including protection against sexualized and gender-based violence.

In order to contribute to the solution of conflicts and to prevent the future suffering of civilians and exacerbation of gender inequalities, we need to support an inclusive, gender-sensitive and multidimensional approach at all stages of the conflict cycle. We must also continue supporting and protecting women peacebuilders.

The voices of women and girls have long been silenced and ignored. In the twenty-first century, it is high time to make room for their perspectives, ideas and input, also accommodating young and diverse voices. Let me underline again that gender equality is in

the interest of everyone, not only women and girls. It concerns all of us and the positive effects will benefit everyone.

The women, peace and security agenda provides a strong framework for this important endeavour. Let us make sure that we – as agents of change, including boys and men – provide the necessary input and make a concerted effort to live up to our commitment to advancing the women, peace and security agenda and our vision of gender equality within the OSCE.

I would kindly ask that this statement be attached to the journal of today's meeting.

Thank you.



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

FSC.JOUR/990
8 September 2021
Annex 2

ENGLISH
Original: GERMAN

984th Plenary Meeting
FSC Journal No. 990, Agenda item 1

**STATEMENT BY
THE DELEGATION OF SWITZERLAND**

Mr. Chairperson,
Secretary-General Launsky,

We thank you for your presentation and congratulate our esteemed neighbour Austria on assuming the Chairmanship of the Forum for Security Co-operation (FSC); we likewise assure the team led by you, Ambassador Raunig – dear Florian – of our fullest support, also with regard to the negotiations aimed at achieving a successful 2021 OSCE Ministerial Council meeting in Stockholm.

In that respect we are grateful for your “supporting gear”, thanks to which we are well equipped to scale the “Stockholm 2021” summit.

We should like to take this opportunity to convey once again our appreciation to Armenia, which chaired the FSC from April to August, and at the same time to welcome Azerbaijan as the incoming member of the FSC Troika.

Over the past few weeks, we have noted with great concern a rapid deterioration of the security situation in Afghanistan, a neighbour of the OSCE area and a partner State. This challenge and the associated events should serve us as a reminder that co-operation to achieve common security and peace in Europe must remain our priority.

Mr. Chairperson,

Switzerland welcomes the decision by Austria to put the future of conventional arms control and disarmament, and also that of the confidence- and security-building measures (CSBMs), at the thematic heart of its FSC Chairmanship. We appreciate this selection, since these are after all core topics of the FSC and they constitute the real *raison d'être* of the politico-military dimension.

In view of the alarming erosion of the pillars upon which conventional arms control and the CSBMs rest, confidence-building and transparency are collapsing and the risk of new military tensions in the OSCE area is increasing.

Far be it from me to strike an alarmist tone, but the situation is troubling and demands the attention and engagement of us all.

That is why we so particularly appreciate the decision by the Austrian FSC Chairmanship to prioritize Security Dialogues on the OSCE Framework for Arms Control, on the future of conventional arms control and on the Vienna Document. The discussions on the modernization of the conventional arms control regime absolutely have to be continued in a constructive manner. This was frequently reiterated during this year's Annual Security Review Conference as well.

We are also very much looking forward to the discussions on military-to-military contacts on doctrines, in which the head of military doctrine in the Swiss armed forces will take part as one of the speakers. Switzerland stands ready to support any initiative aimed at substantially improving military-to-military contacts.

Small arms and light weapons and stockpiles of conventional ammunition continue to be a dynamic area of work for the OSCE. Holding the meeting to review the implementation of OSCE assistance projects in this field will, we hope, also provide an opportunity for the experts from the participating States to again meet with one another and exchange views here in Vienna after such a long time.

One must do the one thing without neglecting the other. In connection with this setting of priorities, we are convinced that the practical and conceptual links between the women, peace and security agenda and conventional arms control on the one hand, and between that agenda and the CSBMs on the other, will bear rich fruit. As an example we may cite the Security Dialogue on the Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security with a particular emphasis on the integration of women in the armed forces. A Code of Conduct seminar on this topic will take place in Sweden in early October 2021, co-sponsored by Austria, Germany, the Czech Republic and Switzerland among others. We will also continue to use the FSC to strengthen and enhance the implementation of United Nations Security Council resolution 1325 within the OSCE's politico-military dimension.

Mr. Chairperson,

The Swiss delegation looks forward to working together with you and your team in the coming weeks: our collaboration will, no doubt, be excellent.

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



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

FSC.JOUR/990
8 September 2021
Annex 3

Original: ENGLISH

984th Plenary Meeting
FSC Journal No. 990, Agenda item 1

**STATEMENT BY
THE DELEGATION OF TURKEY**

Mr. Chairperson,

We warmly welcome Austria as the new holder of the Chairmanship of the Forum for Security Co-operation (FSC).

We would like to express our appreciation to Secretary-General Peter Launsky for his insightful presentation on the Austrian FSC Chairmanship's programme and objectives.

Mr. Secretary-General,

Your messages are valuable. They will provide us with good guidance during our deliberations throughout this trimester.

We are confident that Austria will lead the FSC successfully. We appreciate its planning of the sessions in such a way as to allow the Forum enough time to discuss possible deliverables for the Stockholm Ministerial Council.

I would also like to welcome Azerbaijan to the FSC Troika and express our gratitude to the United States of America as it leaves.

We look forward to the Security Dialogue discussions on core FSC topics.

Dialogues under the topics of (i) OSCE Framework for Arms Control, (ii) Risks and challenges to security, (iii) The future of conventional arms control, (iv) Military-to-military contacts on doctrines, (v) Code of Conduct, (vi) Ongoing initiatives in the field of small arms and light weapons and stockpiles of conventional ammunition are highly important. In this regard, the focus on the latter, including the demonstration activity is particularly noteworthy.

Turkey likewise attaches great importance to the full implementation and modernization of the Vienna Document. We support all related efforts, for which the FSC is the main and unique platform.

We also hope that this trimester will see more support for the latest Vienna Document Plus proposal currently co-sponsored by 34 participating States.

A modernized Vienna Document will contribute to greater transparency and predictability, which are very much needed in view of the developments in the European security architecture.

Thus, Turkey will continue to implement its commitments in this domain and remains ready to contribute to the efforts aimed at modernization of the Vienna Document.

Although it has not proved possible to update the Vienna Document for the last ten years, it is of great importance that a special FSC meeting be held with a view to reissuing the document.

We hope that, after this meeting, the FSC will reissue the Vienna Document.

Turkey also continues to attach utmost importance to gender perspective as an integral part of the comprehensive security approach of the OSCE.

We renew our call for the FSC discussions relating to the crisis in and around Ukraine to be in line with the spirit of constructive dialogue.

Ukraine's territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders, including Crimea and its territorial waters, should be fully respected.

Non-recognition of the illegal annexation of Crimea is a matter of principle for us.

We are concerned about the human rights violations in the peninsula, particularly against Crimean Tatars.

I would like to express our sincere hope for a successful and fruitful Chairmanship and assure you of the Turkish delegation's full support.

We kindly ask you, Mr. Chairperson, to attach our statement to the journal of the day.

Thank you.



**Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
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FSC.JOUR/990
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Annex 4

Original: ENGLISH

984th Plenary Meeting
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**STATEMENT BY
THE DELEGATION OF SWEDEN**

Mr. Chairperson, Dear Florian,
Dear colleagues,

A warm welcome as new FSC Chairmanship.

I would like to thank Armenia as outgoing FSC Chairmanship and welcome Azerbaijan to the Troika. I also take the opportunity to thank the United States of America for their work as FSC Chairmanship and in the Troika.

Together, we now start the third and at the same time the final part of the Swedish Chairmanship, leading up to the Ministerial Council meeting in Stockholm in the beginning of December. We will, as OSCE Chairmanship, continue to work hard in order to achieve tangible results for this Organization.

Among many other issues, the preparation of a number of texts ahead of the Stockholm Ministerial Council meeting will have a strong influence on the work in all three dimensions. The coming months will give us important opportunities to discuss and explore, but also challenges to overcome. This will require commitment and endurance by all participating States and also a preparedness to be flexible and constructive. Only with a true political will to work in good faith will we be able to succeed.

As OSCE Chairmanship, we are looking forward to conduct this work in close co-operation with you as the new FSC Chairmanship. Let me assure you of our readiness to work with you in a close, transparent and effective co-operation.

We have with interest taken account of the ambitious and inspiring Austrian programme for this FSC trimester. Enlightening Security Dialogues on relevant topics can be expected, and we were pleased to hear that they all will take the women, peace and security agenda on board in a distinct manner.

We have among other things, also taken note of the strong effort on conventional arms control, and will with interest follow the developments in this prioritized, but challenging, topic at the core of the FSC's responsibilities and work. During these

challenging times, the discussion on the modernization of the Vienna Document is important and very much coincides with Sweden's strong interest.

We highly appreciate the Security Dialogue on the Code of Conduct on 20 October and welcome the recently revised programme, which puts a particular emphasis on the integration of women in armed forces. This fits well with the Swedish efforts in this field and follows the Code of Conduct event in Stockholm in the end of September.

Mr. Chairperson,

I wish you and your able team good luck in your coming endeavours with hopefully a successful outcome. We are truly looking forward to working closely with you this trimester.

Thank you.

I kindly ask you to attach this statement to the journal of the day.



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**STATEMENT BY
THE DELEGATION OF ARMENIA**

Mr. Chairperson,

The delegation of Armenia congratulates Austria on assuming the Chairmanship of the Forum for Security Co-operation (FSC) and wishes it every success in the months to come. We thank His Excellency Mr. Peter Launsky-Tieffenthal, Secretary-General for Foreign Affairs of Austria, for his comprehensive presentation of the priorities of the Austrian FSC Chairmanship and for sharing Austria's perspective on the security challenges in the OSCE area and the way forward.

Armenia has taken good note of the work programme of the Austrian FSC Chairmanship, which ensures continuity following the efforts and activities undertaken in the Forum since the beginning of the year. We welcome in particular the Security Dialogues on the OSCE Framework for Arms Control and the future of conventional arms control; we look forward to further exploring the topic of conventional arms control, also taking into account the deliberations that took place under the Armenian FSC Chairmanship.

Armenia is pleased to note that the topic of small arms and light weapons (SALW) will also be high on the agenda of the Austrian Chairmanship. We consider that the outcomes of the 7 July Security Dialogue held under the Armenian Chairmanship on the practical assistance mechanism: SALW and stockpiles of conventional ammunition (SCA) could be useful for the efforts of the Austrian Chairmanship in this regard.

The Armenian delegation has expressed its concern many times about the attempts witnessed in recent years to impede the work of the Organization in the field of SALW, including attempts to misuse the assistance mechanism. This resulted in the cancellation of the 2019 OSCE Meeting to Review the Implementation of OSCE Assistance Projects in the Field of SALW and SCA. We therefore welcome the Security Dialogue on ongoing initiatives in the field of SALW and SCA, as well as the forthcoming 2021 OSCE Meeting to Review the Implementation of OSCE Assistance Projects in the Field of Small Arms and Light Weapons and Stockpiles of Conventional Ammunition, and hope that these efforts will help to overcome the existing divisions and contribute to creating an environment conducive to increasing the effectiveness of the Organization in this field.

We also note with interest the announced Security Dialogue on existing risks and challenges to security and look forward to a meaningful discussion.

The position of Armenia on the Vienna Document is well known. Armenia values the Vienna Document, which remains a key instrument for enhancing military transparency and stability in the OSCE area. We believe that modernization of the Vienna Document is possible only through full and unconditional implementation of our commitments and inclusive dialogue.

Mr. Chairperson,

As your Chairmanship coincides with the run-up to the Ministerial Council, it will call for particular determination. We are confident that your able leadership will contribute to the good working of the Forum and hope that your Chairmanship will be marked by important accomplishments. As a member of the FSC Troika I would like to assure you of Armenia's support.

Finally, I would like to note that the FSC Chairmanship requires a balanced and even-handed approach, a solid track record in the implementation of politico-military commitments, and the ability and willingness to contribute to further strengthening the role and the mandate of the FSC. Austria can for sure serve as a role model and is well-equipped to lead the Forum by its example. We proceed on the understanding that all Chairmanships should be assessed in this perspective. And this will be the criterion by which the Armenian delegation will assess all forthcoming Chairmanships.

In conclusion, allow me to once again thank His Excellency Secretary-General Launsky-Tieffenthal for outlining the priorities of the Austrian Chairmanship. Let me also thank the US delegation as it leaves the FSC Troika.

I thank you and 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/990
8 September 2021
Annex 6

ENGLISH
Original: RUSSIAN

984th Plenary Meeting
FSC Journal No. 990, Agenda item 1

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

Mr. Chairperson,
Ambassador Raunig,

Please accept our congratulations for the Austrian delegation on the start of your country's Chairmanship of the OSCE Forum for Security Co-operation (FSC). We welcome His Excellency Mr. Peter Launsky-Tieffenthal, Secretary-General of the Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs of the Republic of Austria, and thank him for his detailed presentation of the priorities for the work of the FSC during the forthcoming trimester.

We join in the positive assessments of the Armenian Chairmanship's performance and note the great professionalism of our distinguished Armenian colleagues, who packed the FSC agenda with highly promising topics. It would be useful to continue addressing at the FSC in the future such major thematic blocks as the development of the OSCE's contacts with other regional organizations in the field of security, or the impact of the latest military technologies on stability.

We warmly welcome the delegation of Azerbaijan as the incoming member of the FSC Troika and thank the United States of America as the outgoing member.

Mr. Chairperson,

It was with keen interest that we assimilated the perceptive statement by the distinguished Secretary-General on the priorities of the Austrian FSC Chairmanship. We share his position regarding the need to achieve consensus by finding agreement on the basis of a balance of interests and a focus on constructive dialogue. We support the striving to restore the role of our Forum, an autonomous decision-making body, in safeguarding politico-military security on the European continent.

It would not be amiss to recall that the FSC was conceived by its founders as the principal and, indeed, sole pan-European structure responsible for politico-military stability in Europe. The assumption was that this stability would be safeguarded above all through negotiations on arms control and on confidence- and security-building measures (CSBMs). At first the FSC was up to this task. In the 1990s, a whole array of fundamental documents

comprising what is referred to as the “politico-military toolkit” were developed. The OSCE community uses that toolkit to this day.

In that regard, we have noted with encouragement Austria’s initiative in devoting a series of Security Dialogues to the past, present and future of conventional arms control, and also in continuing the professional conversation on issues of military doctrine. This is particularly relevant in the current challenging security environment, where certain participating States are making a conscious choice to engage in confrontation, the erosion of arms control and sabre-rattling near borders, thereby testing a given neighbouring State’s readiness to respond.

The Austrian Chairmanship will also be responsible for organizing the celebrations to mark the 25th anniversary of the Framework for Arms Control, which is focused on putting into practice the principle of the indivisibility of the OSCE participating States’ security. Incidentally, five years ago, thanks in part to that document, the Structured Dialogue dealing with risks and challenges to security in the OSCE area was launched. We trust that the forthcoming discussions in both forums will allow us to begin to trace the contours of a shared vision for the future of conventional arms control in Europe.

When drawing up the programme for our joint work, the Austrian delegation devoted considerable attention to the topic of small arms and light weapons (SALW) and stockpiles of conventional ammunition (SCA). We look forward with interest to the OSCE Meeting to Review the Implementation of OSCE Assistance Projects in the Field of SALW and SCA, and also to the “practical demonstration” that is scheduled to take place following an FSC meeting.

In advance of the special FSC meeting on the Vienna Document 2011, we should like to recall that modernization of the latter in the current security environment is not viable for our country. At the same time, there remains in our view certain scope for enhancing the practical implementation of CSBMs. We believe that the Meeting of the Heads of Verification Centres will provide us with an opportunity to conduct a professional and non-politicized dialogue on that topic.

We think it is extremely important to support and develop the role of the FSC as an unparalleled platform for pan-European dialogue. What is vital here is to prevent it from entering a phase of stagnation and thematic shallowness and to stop its agenda from being stuffed with “soft” security measures, including “gender” aspects, which are not directly related to politico-military stability. It is questionable whether looking at the OSCE Code of Conduct from the angle of the integration of women into the armed forces will facilitate its effective implementation. Let us be frank: in that document there is not a single word about members of the fairer sex serving in the army.

If the premise is that security in Europe really is indivisible, then it is essential that we should think together about the steps that could lead to a de-escalation of tensions, risk reduction and the prevention of dangerous military incidents. If on the other hand we continue pretending that everything is “all right” and focusing our main efforts on addressing topics that have nothing to do with the FSC’s mandate, then we risk marginalizing our negotiation platform for good.

Such a prospect definitely does not appeal to us. That is why Russia calls for the FSC to be made to face up to truly important issues, on whose resolution security and stability on the continent depend. On a positive note, we may point out that the Austrian Chairmanship's agenda envisages the discussion of topics of that very kind.

Allow us to express our sincere gratitude once again to His Excellency the Secretary-General for his detailed presentation of the Austrian Chairmanship's priorities and to wholeheartedly wish the distinguished Austrian delegation every possible success in chairing the FSC during, as it happens, the most challenging phase of our negotiating body's work as it involves the preparation of documents for the OSCE Ministerial Council meeting in Stockholm. We wish to assure you, dear Ambassador Raunig, that we for our part stand ready to provide the necessary assistance. We look forward to working productively with you and the distinguished members of the Troika.

In closing, I cannot but respond to the references to my country by Ukraine and the "quartet" of States that is so familiar to us here. Today we once again heard the hackneyed melodies and rhythms of our "foreign pop stars" singing about the internal Ukrainian settlement process. We shall not go into the details of our position or remind you about the status of Crimea. Russia wants there to be peace in Ukraine – so that children do not receive shrapnel and bullet wounds courtesy of the Ukrainian armed forces and Nazi formations when they start the new school year on Knowledge Day (1 September). As a mediator we are doing our best to contribute to a peaceful settlement and are providing humanitarian aid to the civilian population of Donbas.

We would very much recommend our colleagues to once again study the Minsk agreements without anger or partisanship (*sine ira et studio*), as the adage goes. The Package of Measures is binding on the parties to the internal Ukrainian conflict, that is, the Ukrainian Government and the authorities in Donetsk and Luhansk. But here is the rub: according to an assertion by Oleskiy Arestovych, adviser to the head of the Office of the President of Ukraine, "as far as the Minsk agreements are concerned, Ukraine has got itself off the hook." We, the co-sponsors of the internal Ukrainian settlement process, and our US partners take a different view, namely that there is no alternative to the Minsk Package and it must be implemented in accordance with the sequence of steps laid down therein. By reneging on their obligations, the Ukrainian leadership are dooming their country to inevitable critical problems in the future and civilians to further suffering.

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