

Chairmanship: Austria

993rd PLENARY MEETING OF THE FORUM

1. Date: Wednesday, 17 November 2021 (in the Neuer Saal and via video teleconference)

Opened: 10.05 a.m.
Suspended: 10.10 a.m.
Resumed: 10.20 a.m.
Closed: 11.50 a.m.

2. Chairperson: Mr. R. Lassmann

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

Agenda item 1: GENERAL STATEMENTS

- (a) *Situation in and around Ukraine*: Ukraine (FSC.DEL/418/21 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 Andorra, Georgia, Moldova, San Marino and Ukraine, in alignment) (FSC.DEL/419/21), United States of America (FSC.DEL/415/21 OSCE+), United Kingdom (FSC.DEL/417/21 OSCE+), Canada, Russian Federation (Annex 1)
- (b) *Situation in the South Caucasus*: Armenia (Annex 2), Azerbaijan (Annex 3), Slovenia-European Union, United States of America, United Kingdom, Canada, Turkey

Agenda item 2: ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- (a) *Military exercise “Cerces 2021”*, being conducted from 15 to 26 November 2021: France
- (b) *Resumption of verification activities in November 2021*: Portugal

- (c) *Informal meeting on the implementation of assistance projects on small arms and light weapons (SALW) and stockpiles of conventional ammunition (SCA) in the OSCE area, to be held in Montenegro and via video teleconference on 9 December 2021: Montenegro*
- (d) *Twentieth plenary meeting of the Commission on the Concluding Document of the Negotiations under Article V of Annex 1-B of the General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina, held on 2 November 2021: Slovenia (Annex 4), Turkey*

4. Next meeting:

Wednesday, 24 November 2021, at 10 a.m., in the Neuer Saal and via video teleconference



993rd Plenary Meeting

FSC Journal No. 999, Agenda item 1(a)

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

Mr. Chairperson,

Unfortunately, when the subject of the armed conflict between the regime in Kyiv and the people of Donbas comes up, one can speak only of a constant deterioration of the situation. Moreover, this state of affairs, for which the Ukrainian authorities are exclusively to blame, is being exploited by the Western “overlords” of the Ukrainian Government to exert pressure on the Russian Federation. Absurd arguments are thus invoked about some mythical “Russian threat” to the sovereignty of Ukraine.

The unscheduled exercise in the Black Sea initiated a few days ago by the United States of America and its NATO allies is further confirmation of this. Both naval forces and strategic aircraft have been deployed to take part in the manoeuvres. During the previous meeting of the Forum for Security Co-operation (FSC), we already pointed out how such actions quite simply amount to “reconnaissance by fire”. We are no longer surprised by the propagandist explanations proffered by Western countries for this show of force, namely that Russia is allegedly preparing for an invasion of Ukraine. Any comment on this would be superfluous.

Russian representatives have emphasized repeatedly and at various levels that the policy of “containing” our country is misguided: it does not rest on any logical foundations and will lead merely to further deterioration of the situation. For this very reason, we propose focusing on the holding of regular meetings between military experts to discuss ways of de-escalating tensions.

Mr. Chairperson,

The situation in Donbas continues to be a source of grave concern. It was not for nothing that we mentioned the military exercise in the Black Sea. In our view, this exercise is directly linked to the surge in tensions that may be observed in the zone of the internal Ukrainian military conflict. It would seem that the Ukrainian Government really is considering in earnest the option of resolving the conflict in Donbas by force. We once again caution our Western partners and the Kyiv authorities against such reckless steps, which could well send Ukrainian statehood – already not too stable as it is – crashing down. I am sure that no one would wish to see such a turn of events.

For now, the regime in Kyiv, enjoying the unconditional support of its transoceanic handlers, has no qualms about exacerbating the situation, notably through the use of the very latest weapons (including a Bayraktar unmanned combat aerial vehicle), the use of which is prohibited under the Minsk agreements.

Judging by the report from 14 November of the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine (SMM), the Mission staff once again came under fire in territory controlled by the Ukrainian armed forces (specifically, the village of Novozvanivka) in an incident involving the use of an unmanned aerial vehicle. Significantly, our Western colleagues at the FSC continue in hypocritical fashion to single out obstacles to the movement of SMM patrols arising exclusively on the militia side. We once again stress that endangering the lives of the monitors is absolutely unacceptable.

The Russian Federation continues to take the position that implementation of the Minsk Package of Measures of 12 February 2015 is the sole way out of the situation. That being said, any attempts to demand of Russia that it somehow “implement” the Minsk agreements itself merely serve to divert attention from the main problem, which is non-compliance with the Minsk Package’s provisions by Ukraine. The Russian Federation was never a party to the conflict, as is clearly stated in the aforementioned agreements and as was reiterated on 13 November by the President of Russia, Vladimir Putin. Our obligation – in our capacity as a mediator alongside the OSCE, Germany and France – is to facilitate a peaceful settlement in every possible way, and I can assure you that we are putting great effort into this. We once again call on our Western partners to bring their influence to bear on the Ukrainian powers that be with a view to creating favourable conditions for proper implementation of the Minsk agreements.

Mr. Chairperson,

Allow me also to briefly comment on two quite significant events in the context of the internal Ukrainian crisis.

First of all, as we know, on 10 November a meeting of the US-Ukrainian Strategic Partnership Commission took place in Washington, D.C. We noted what the United States Secretary of State, Antony Blinken, following the talks, said about there being only a diplomatic solution to the internal Ukrainian conflict. Significantly, Mr. Blinken announced at the same time that 400 million US dollars had been allocated to the Ukrainian authorities for military spending. Practical assistance to the Ukrainian Government in the form of supplies of military hardware has not been long in coming either: as reported by the US Embassy in Kyiv, around 80 tonnes of ammunition were handed over to Ukraine on 14 November.

Secondly, not so long ago, the Ukrainian Government submitted a draft law “On the principles of the State policy of the transition period” to the Verkhovna Rada (Ukrainian Parliament) for consideration. In this connection, I wish to cite the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, Sergey Lavrov, who observed that the draft law had nothing in common with a peaceful settlement of the situation and that it would merely exacerbate it and effectively imply Ukraine’s withdrawal from the Minsk agreements, which

the document in question was completely at odds with. I should like to express the hope that reason will nevertheless prevail in Kyiv.

Mr. Chairperson,

I also wish to comment on the “concerns” of our Western partners related to their accusations of “hybrid warfare” being waged through the strategic aircraft exercise conducted by Russia together with our Belarusian colleagues. Hysterical cries are to be heard about how this activity is linked to the crisis that has recently flared up at the Belarusian-Polish border.

This is a scheduled – I emphasize, scheduled – exercise conducted in accordance with bilateral agreements and in compliance with all international legal requirements. It is not directed against any third countries. President Putin has already stated that such exercises were unilaterally suspended by us in the 1990s and early 2000s. Russia was forced to revert to this practice by the provocative military activities of the United States and NATO on the “eastern flank”, for, as it turned out, neither the one, nor the other had any intention of reciprocating.

To safeguard its national interests and security interests, Russia will continue to conduct such exercises, both on its territory and together with our Belarusian friends, whether our Western colleagues like it or not.

As for the crisis itself at the Belarusian-Polish border, I shall be brief. Russia has nothing to do with it. That being said, our country is willing to assist in resolving it as quickly as possible.

Mr. Chairperson,

In closing, I should like to emphasize once again that OSCE participating States which provide military-technical assistance in any form to the Ukrainian Government share responsibility with the Ukrainian military for the casualties among the civilian population and for the further worsening of the situation in Donbas. It is time for the Ukrainian Government’s Western handlers to finally stop abetting its attempts to make the conflict out to be external rather than internal, which it does so as to continue disguising its involvement in undermining the efforts to achieve peace in Donbas. As a co-mediator in the peace process, Russia stresses that any further prolongation of the armed violence in eastern Ukraine is unacceptable.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson. I request that the text of this statement be attached to the journal of today’s FSC meeting.



993rd Plenary Meeting

FSC Journal No. 999, Agenda item 1(b)

**STATEMENT BY
THE DELEGATION OF ARMENIA**

Mr. Chairperson,

I would like to inform the Forum about the latest aggression and armed attack by Azerbaijan against Armenia.

Yesterday, on 16 November, the armed forces of Azerbaijan, using artillery and armoured vehicles, launched a large-scale attack in the eastern direction of the Armenian border and infiltrated into the sovereign territory of the Republic of Armenia, causing loss of human lives. According to reports, the attack resulted in casualties on the Armenian side, and a number of Armenian servicemen have been taken hostage by the Azerbaijani troops.

This attack comes as a logical continuation of Azerbaijan's policy of creeping occupation of the Armenian territories, which began on 12 May 2021 with the infiltration of Azerbaijani armed forces into the Syunik and Gegharkunik regions of Armenia. It is worth mentioning that the armed forces of Azerbaijan launched their attack from the territories that came under the control of Azerbaijan as a result of Armenia's implementation of the trilateral ceasefire statement. Meanwhile, in an attempt to cover up its aggression against Armenia and incursion into Armenian territory and to mislead the international community, Azerbaijan continues to use the tactic of reusing and replicating old counter-accusations against Armenia. Azerbaijan's responsibility for yesterday's attack on the sovereign territory of Armenia is confirmed by its constant provocations throughout the post-war period, the rhetoric of its military-political leadership, full of anti-Armenian hatred, territorial claims and threats to use force.

Mr. Chairperson,

Over the past year, Azerbaijan has deliberately and systematically violated the ceasefire and the provisions of the trilateral statement of 9 November, undertaking, *inter alia*, provocative actions along the line of contact with Artsakh and the Armenia-Azerbaijan State border, which have led both to civilian and military casualties and to the escalation of tensions. On 15 October, in an act that has gone unpunished, a farmer was killed by sniper fire in the presence of Russian peacekeepers. On 8 November, the Azerbaijani side committed another provocation against civilians conducting repair work on the water pipeline near the Stepanakert-Shushi road not far from a checkpoint of Russian peacekeepers. It

should be stressed that the Azerbaijani side was properly notified in advance about the planned repair work, but this did not prevent an Azerbaijani officer from shooting at civilian workers at practically point-blank range. As a result of this outright crime, one civilian, 22-year-old Martik Yeremyan, was killed and three others were seriously wounded.

Mr. Chairperson,

Yesterday's attack and the continuing flagrant violation of the territorial integrity of Armenia by Azerbaijan are direct consequences of the war of aggression waged by Azerbaijan and its allies against the people of Artsakh. The lack of a firm and decisive response to the use of force by Azerbaijan as a means of "resolving" the conflict – and to Azerbaijan's massive and serious violations of international humanitarian and human rights law – has further emboldened and encouraged the country's authoritarian leadership to step up its hostile policy and aggressive posturing towards the Republic of Armenia, including through attempts to seize Armenian territory and to threaten the local population and deprive them of their livelihood, thereby forcing them to flee their native land.

Azerbaijan must stop its aggressive and clearly provocative behaviour and immediately withdraw its troops from the sovereign territory of Armenia. We call on the Chairperson-in-Office, the Co-Chair countries of the OSCE Minsk Group, and the OSCE participating States to give a clear and targeted assessment of these actions by the Azerbaijani side, which undermine regional peace and security, and to take effective steps aimed at their prevention and at the unconditional and complete withdrawal of the Azerbaijani troops from Armenian territory.

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



993rd Plenary Meeting

FSC Journal No. 999, Agenda item 1(b)

**STATEMENT BY
THE DELEGATION OF AZERBAIJAN**

Mr. Chairperson,

We would like to exercise our right of reply to the delegation of Armenia.

Before going into the details of the recent tensions caused by Armenia's large-scale provocations at the State border between Azerbaijan and Armenia, we would like to remind that the consistent position of Azerbaijan in the post-conflict period has been premised on the vision of consolidating peace, security and stability in the region.

The trilateral statement of 10 November 2020 signed by Armenia, Azerbaijan and the Russian Federation put an end to the armed conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan and set the agreed parameters for establishing durable peace in the region. We believe that despite Armenia's long track record of international wrongdoings and despite the devastating consequences of the almost three-decade-old war and occupation of Azerbaijan's territories, the post-conflict realities offer a unique opportunity and real prospects for building peace, consolidating stability, restoring peaceful coexistence, advancing the reconciliation agenda and investing in economic development and co-operation. Azerbaijan has repeatedly expressed its readiness for the reconciliation and normalization of inter-State relations with Armenia based on mutual recognition and respect for each other's sovereignty and territorial integrity within their internationally recognized borders, including through signing a peace treaty based on these principles.

Unfortunately, we have not yet seen any positive reaction from Armenia regarding our constructive proposal. On the contrary, Armenia attempts to reanimate obsolete conflict narratives and concepts which have no relevance anymore and are torn from the new realities on the ground. Armenia exhibits a highly revanchist attitude in the post-conflict period, which expresses itself in all sorts of provocations aimed at jeopardizing the prospects for establishing durable peace and stability in the region.

In the course of the past weeks, we witnessed a series of provocations committed by Armenia. Thus, last week former Defence Minister of Armenia Arshak Karapetyan illegally visited the territory of Azerbaijan, where the Russian peacekeeping contingent is temporarily deployed to, held meetings with unlawful Armenian formations and inspected their so-called "combat readiness". Illegal visit of an Armenian official to the sovereign territory of

Azerbaijan on the eve of the anniversary of the trilateral statement is a broad-daylight provocation and a serious blow to peace-building efforts. The Ministry of Defence of Azerbaijan issued a warning to the military-political leadership of Armenia with regard to such illegal visits.

Furthermore, last week about 60 servicemen of the Armenian armed forces attempted to advance to the positions of the Azerbaijan's armed forces in the Lachin district of Azerbaijan. With mediation from the Russian side, Azerbaijan demonstrated goodwill and allowed those surrounded Armenian servicemen to return to their previous positions.

On 13 November, a citizen of Armenia, driving along the Khankendi-Lachin highway near the city of Shusha of Azerbaijan, threw a grenade towards the Azerbaijani servicemen and Russian peacekeepers stationed there. As a result of the attack, three Azerbaijani servicemen were injured to varying degrees. The perpetrator of this attack was captured by the Russian peacekeepers.

On 16 November, Armenian armed forces having accumulated additional forces in the Basarkechar and Garakilsa regions, using mortars of various calibre and artillery pieces launched a sudden military operation and attacked the positions of the Azerbaijani armed forces in the direction of the State border in Lachin and Kalbajar districts of Azerbaijan. As a result of this attack, seven Azerbaijani servicemen were killed and ten were wounded. Azerbaijani units in response to this provocation took countermeasures to suppress the combat activity of the Armenian armed forces. As a result of the decisive measures, the attacking Armenian servicemen were disarmed and detained, weapons of various calibre and ammunition were seized. Thus, this military adventure of Armenia turned into another failure.

We emphasize that by responding to Armenia's large-scale provocations at the State border, Azerbaijani servicemen fulfilled their duties on the sovereign territory of Azerbaijan. As we underlined on a number of occasions, the armed forces of Azerbaijan will be taking appropriate resolute measures to repel such provocations of Armenia and protect Azerbaijan's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

We recall that Azerbaijan has previously offered Armenia to launch the process of delimitation and demarcation of the entire State border and supported the proposal to establish an inter-State commission to this end. The recent tensions at the State border caused by Armenia's irresponsible military adventurism demonstrate once again that Armenia is neither interested in consolidating peace and stability in the region, nor in delimitation and demarcation of the State border and, instead, attempts to resolve the issue through use of force.

The recent provocations and public statements coming from Armenia indicate that, apparently, Armenia prefers to misuse the issue for its narrow political purposes, feeding revanchist attitudes at home, as the recent events vividly showed. It is a dangerous exercise with unpredictable consequences which by no means contributes to the consolidation of peace, and the main responsibility for that lies directly with Armenia's military-political leadership.

The recent provocations of Armenia testify to an urgent need for ensuring the full implementation of the trilateral statements by this country. In particular, Armenia must comply fully with the Article 4 of the statement, which requires Armenia to withdraw its armed forces from the territories of Azerbaijan in parallel with the temporary deployment of the Russian Federation's peacekeeping contingent.

It is highly alarming that Armenia did not draw lessons from the recent past and its defeat on the battlefield last year, and has once again chosen the path of confrontation with the Azerbaijani side, thus refusing to accept the new realities on the ground. We reiterate that it is essential for Armenia to soberly assess the new realities and not to rely on miscalculations or false expectations that could jeopardize fragile peace in the region established with the signing of the trilateral statements. Instead, Armenia should reciprocate on the constructive offer of Azerbaijan and seize the historic opportunity to normalize its relations with neighbouring countries, which will open up immense opportunities for this country and for the broader region. To this end, we emphasize an important role that could be played by the international community, including the OSCE and its participating States, by sending to Armenia the right messages – that there is no alternative to peace with its neighbours and that it should direct its resources towards the implementation of the trilateral statements in good faith with a view of consolidating peace and stability in the region.

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



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

FSC.JOUR/999
17 November 2021
Annex 4

Original: ENGLISH

993rd Plenary Meeting

FSC Journal No. 999, Agenda item 2(d)

**STATEMENT BY
THE DELEGATION OF SLOVENIA**

Mr. Chairperson,

The following statement will be delivered in my national capacity.

Dear colleagues,

In line with paragraph 19 of the Concluding Document of the Negotiations under Article V of Annex 1-B of the General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina, also known as the Dayton Agreement, we would like to inform the Forum for Security Co-operation (FSC) that the 20th meeting of the Commission of the participating States on the Concluding Document took place two weeks ago on 2 November, this time under the Chairmanship of Slovenia.

As you know, the Commission normally meets once a year.

This year also marks the 25th anniversary of the signing of the Agreement on Sub-Regional Arms Control, which is part of the military dimension of the Dayton Agreement.

At the meeting, the participating States presented their activities in 2021 and emphasized the importance of compliance with the Agreement and of full implementation of commitments.

Many welcomed the resumption of verification activities.

The journal of the meeting will be available on DelWeb in a few days.

In conclusion, we would like to inform the FSC that the Chairmanship of the Commission has been handed over to Turkey.

We wish our Turkish colleagues every success.

We kindly ask that this statement be attached to the journal of the day. Thank you.