

Chairmanship: Germany**961st PLENARY MEETING OF THE FORUM**

1. Date: Wednesday, 18 November 2020 (via video teleconference)

Opened: 10.05 a.m.
Closed: 11.15 a.m.

2. Chairperson: Ambassador G. Bräutigam

Prior to taking up the agenda, the Chairperson reminded the Forum for Security Co-operation (FSC) of the technical modalities for the conduct of that FSC meeting during the COVID-19 pandemic, as outlined in FSC.GAL/109/20.

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

Agenda item 1: GENERAL STATEMENTS

Situation in and around Ukraine: Ukraine (FSC.DEL/307/20) (FSC.DEL/307/20/Add.1), Germany-EU (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/310/20), United Kingdom (FSC.DEL/309/20 OSCE+), Canada, United States of America, Russian Federation (Annex 1), Lithuania

Agenda item 2: ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- (a) *Financial contribution to the project entitled “Addressing security and safety risks of illegal possession, misuse and trafficking of SALW and their ammunition in Bosnia and Herzegovina”:* Germany (Annex 2), Czech Republic, Bosnia and Herzegovina, FSC Co-ordinator for Assistance Projects on SALW and SCA (Austria)
- (b) *Financial contribution to the OSCE Scholarship for Peace and Security project:* France

- (c) *Informal meeting on implementation of assistance projects on SALW and SCA in the OSCE area, held on 12 November 2020, and a meeting on guidance notes for assistance projects, held on 17 November 2020: FSC Co-ordinator for Assistance Projects on SALW and SCA (Austria)*

4. Next meeting:

Wednesday, 25 November 2020, at 10 a.m., via video teleconference

961st Plenary Meeting

FSC Journal No. 967, Agenda item 1

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

Madam Chairperson,

Our position regarding the internal Ukrainian conflict remains unchanged – there needs to be full implementation of the Minsk Package of Measures of 12 February 2015 through direct dialogue between the Ukrainian Government and the authorities in Donetsk and Luhansk. The Russian Federation, in its capacity as a mediator alongside the OSCE, France and Germany, stands ready to facilitate this in every possible way.

Last week, the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine (SMM) presented, with the assistance of the Albanian OSCE Chairmanship, a thematic report on civilian casualties in the conflict-affected regions of eastern Ukraine. I would remind you that in the report on the same topic that was distributed in 2017 it was pointed out that the majority of casualties had occurred in areas not controlled by the Ukrainian Government. The situation has not changed since then. The number of civilian casualties (657) recorded over the past three years in certain areas of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions is almost 2.5 times higher than that in government-controlled areas. It is noteworthy that the non-government-controlled areas account for 75 per cent of the casualties due to small arms and heavy weapons fire – that is, shelling by mortars, howitzers, multiple-launch rocket systems and tanks. The overall number of ceasefire violations during the reporting period exceeded the 1 million mark.

We now invite our esteemed colleagues to recall how the delegation of Ukraine to the Forum for Security Co-operation (FSC) has on more than one occasion given assurances to the effect that the Ukrainian armed forces were “just returning fire”. This raises the legitimate question as to whom they were firing back at. Indeed, who are the “valiant” Ukrainian military and security forces battling against? One does not need to be a military expert to understand that the intensive shelling of residential areas of Donbas by the Ukrainian armed forces cannot be fully justified by the task of suppressing enemy fire. The data presented to us eloquently testify to the fact that the Ukrainian armed forces, the National Guard and the so-called volunteer formations are targeting civilians, whom the Ukrainian Government is trying to punish for their decision to reject the outcomes of the anti-constitutional coup d'état of 2014. Some fresh examples are readily available: according to Donetsk media, on 11 November the Ukrainian military fired anti-tank guided missiles in the direction of the

village of Vesele and the Donetsk airport terminal. We expect the Mission's monitors to reflect these facts in their weekly reports.

Incidentally, the Russian delegation at the FSC has on several occasions given presentations containing half-yearly statistics on the casualties and destruction in Donbas based on thorough analysis of the SMM reports. One cannot but be outraged at how the Western OSCE participating States have chosen to ignore these facts and to continue thanking the Ukrainian Government for its "constructive" approach to the fulfilment of its commitments as part of the process for a peaceful settlement and also for its alleged display of "military restraint". It is high time that our partners finally stop closing their eyes to the suffering of the civilian population of Donbas; and that France and Germany as international mediators embark on the path of providing impartial support to the efforts to achieve a settlement: they should demand a responsible attitude from the Ukrainian side to the task of bringing peace closer in the south-east of the country with no ifs or buts about it.

I make no secret of the fact that people in Russia are astonished at the lack of criticism from Europe for the way in which the Ukrainian Government is openly violating its obligations. A glaring example is the so-called "Plan of joint steps to implement the Minsk agreements" proposed by the Ukrainian side, which is completely at odds with the spirit and the letter of the Package of Measures. The French and German Governments' failure to notice these facts can only be interpreted as their approving of the Ukrainian Government's course aimed at undermining the foundations of the conflict settlement process, which were endorsed by United Nations Security Council resolution 2202. If people in Europe genuinely want peace in Donbas, then it is essential that double standards be abandoned. But if the West is not interested in a settlement of the conflict, then it should openly state its position.

As a co-mediator in the peace process, Russia stresses that any further prolongation of the armed violence in eastern Ukraine is unacceptable. The Ukrainian Government must put an immediate stop to the punitive operation against the civilian population of Donbas, withdraw its weapons and move them to the designated storage sites, disarm all illegal groups, and pull the foreign military equipment and mercenaries out of Ukraine. It is essential that the inhumane socio-economic blockade of Donbas be lifted and the region itself be granted special status as a matter of urgency. All of Ukraine's obligations under the Minsk agreements must be fulfilled. Political and security measures are closely interlinked and should be implemented simultaneously. Without resolving the political issues, a comprehensive settlement of the crisis in Ukraine is impossible. We emphasize the direct responsibility of the Ukrainian Government for the practical implementation of all aspects of the Minsk Package of Measures and the instructions from the "Normandy format" summit held in Paris.

Madam Chairperson,

The ongoing crisis in Ukraine is the result of the February 2014 coup d'état, which was orchestrated, funded and organized from abroad and has led to the armed confrontation in Donbas and the suffering of millions of Ukrainian civilians. For more than six years now, the Ukrainian Government's Western partners have not really sought to promote a real cessation of hostilities and a political settlement, but have instead been schooling the Ukrainian army in the "art of war". US specialists have already trained 13 battalions and three brigades. More than 17,000 military personnel of the Ukrainian armed forces have

undergone training by British instructors (as part of “Operation Orbital”). A Lithuanian training mission is helping to drill personnel from the Special Operations Forces and from mechanized and air assault units, along with snipers too. This list could be continued.

It is also well known that the Ukrainian military is actively using foreign military equipment and ammunition in the zone where the Joint Forces Operation is being conducted. The SMM regularly reports the presence of US-manufactured AN/TPQ-36 mobile counter-battery radar systems and British-made Saxon armoured personnel carriers near the line of contact.

We would remind you that participating States that provide military assistance in any form to Ukraine are thereby encouraging the “war party” in Kyiv and share responsibility with the Ukrainian military for the casualties among the civilian population and the destruction in Donbas. Such actions contravene the letter and the spirit of the OSCE Document on Small Arms and Light Weapons, they run counter to the CSCE Principles Governing Conventional Arms Transfers, and they also give a boost to the “war party” in Kyiv with its belligerent aspirations towards Donbas.

We call on our international partners and Ukraine’s external “minders” to finally stop misrepresenting the true causes of the internal Ukrainian crisis and, with a view to swiftly halting the armed confrontation in Donbas, to bring maximum influence to bear on the Ukrainian leadership, urging the latter to respect the fact that there is no alternative to the Minsk Package of Measures, as was stated at the “Normandy format” summit held in Paris in December 2019.

In response to the Ukrainian delegation’s assertion regarding a constituent entity of the Russian Federation, we wish to emphasize the following. First of all, the status of Crimea is not up for discussion. We have already had occasion to express ourselves on this matter at length. Our distinguished colleagues will find the relevant statements by us in the FSC journals. Secondly, Russia is entitled to undertake any measures on its own national territory to ensure its defence capability. The same right may be exercised by all OSCE participating States within their State borders.

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

961st Plenary Meeting
FSC Journal No. 967, Agenda item 2(a)**STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF GERMANY**

Madam Chairperson,
Excellencies,
Esteemed colleagues,

I am pleased to be able to inform you today that Germany has decided to support project number 2200469 entitled “Addressing security and safety risks of illegal possession, misuse and trafficking of small arms and light weapons (SALW) and their ammunition in Bosnia and Herzegovina”. This project consists of four subprojects in total and will comprehensively cover all aspects of SALW control.

Germany recognizes the great importance of the project and is providing 340,000 euros to ensure that it can get under way.

We are convinced that by sponsoring this project we are making a significant contribution to securing the OSCE environment.

We would be delighted if other participating States could also consider financing the project.

Madam Chairperson, I request that this statement be attached to the journal of the day.