



"Gå på" with SALW, Code of Conduct and gender mainstreaming

Statement by Ambassador Andrej Benedejčič, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Slovenia, on the priorities of the Swedish FSC Chairmanship, at the 890th Meeting of the OSCE Forum for Security Co-operation, Vienna, 5 September 2018

Madam Chairperson, Dear Ulrika,

It is a real pleasure to see you sitting with the gavel in hand at the head of the Forum for Security Co-operation, one of the two decision-making bodies of the OSCE. The knowledge that this will happen even influenced my summer reading list. Among the books I went through was also one by the Swedish historian Peter Englund about King Charles XII. I thus learned about the exploits of some of Swedish military units, including the legendary Jämtland Rifle Regiment. Imagine, therefore, my surprise when I realized upon looking at the curriculum vitae of State Secretary Jan Salestrand that there is also a Jämtland Air Force Wing. I guess this goes to show the accuracy of the old saying that as times change, we change with them.

There is, however, one thing that apparently does not change. And that is the high caliber of people that Sweden can rely on, be it in defense or in diplomacy. State Secretary Salestrand, who spoke eloquently about priorities of the Swedish FSC Chairmanship, is a highly decorated officer. And you, Madam Chairperson, who will be doing the actual chairing, are an experienced and well-regarded diplomat. This and the quality of your team leads me to conclude that we are all in safe hands.

Let me, therefore, make three brief points. First, I commend you for a balanced program, which combines your priorities with the continuity of work in this Forum. Here I have especially in mind the attention you intend to pay to the issue of Small Arms and Light Weapons. This is important because the OSCE region comprises many major producers of such weapons and also because the Organization is an important player in this area, with numerous assistance projects.

Second, I am glad that you plan to highlight the Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security. The Code is, without a doubt, the most important normative document adopted by the OSCE participating States since the Helsinki Final Act. Its unique and timeless norm-setting framework has managed to withstand the test of time. As such it remains a valuable tool for dealing with contemporary security challenges, of which there are many, especially in the Euro-Atlantic space.

And, third, I look forward to your special event on the 18th anniversary of the adoption of the UNSCR 1325. Women's rights are inextricably linked to security, which is why it is important to continue mainstreaming a gender perspective in the politico-military dimension. The Slovenian FSC Chairmanship did it and I know that the Swedish one will too. Not only is yours a feminist foreign policy, but Colonel Johan Huovinen took an active part in the recent staging at the Hofburg of the documentary play SEVEN on real-life experiences of seven women from around the world. As the Chairperson of the OSCE MenEngage Network let me say that his contribution was important and very much appreciated.

Before concluding, I would like to return once again to the Swedish historian I mentioned earlier. In his book he also described the so-called "gå på" or "go on" Swedish method of fearless fighting. I guess this is the approach I would advise you to follow: go on and fulfill your excellent program. In this you can always count on the support of Slovenia, both as the former Chairmanship and the continuing member of the FSC Troika.

Lycka till! Good luck!