



United States Mission to the OSCE
U.S. Statement for the
Forum for Security Cooperation:
On the Adoption of the Agenda

As delivered by Arms Control Counselor Daniel Wartko
November 20, 2024

Thank you, Mr. Chair,

Welcome to our colleagues from Hungary who are here with us today.

First, I wish to convey the strong support of the United States for the actions that you have taken as Chair to ensure the good order and smooth running of the FSC in very difficult circumstances.

Second (and for those who have not participated in this forum for as long as many of us have) we find it necessary to counter Russia's attempt to mischaracterize what is happening in this forum. As we have heard in its statement this morning as we have read in the diplomatic note circulated yesterday, and as we have seen in statements by the Russian Foreign Ministry, Russia is attempting to blame this impasse on one participating State — Denmark — and on one person in particular — you, Mr. Chair.

This is absolutely false.

For two years running, Russia has been obstructing and disrupting the good order and smooth running of this forum under six different FSC Chairs. Beginning with Bosnia and Herzegovina, and for the first time in nearly one thousand sessions, the FSC was prevented from meeting. The Bosnian chair attempted to resolve that impasse, but Russia refused any solution. Then under Bulgaria, under Canada, under Cyprus, and under Croatia, the FSC Chairs each adjusted to increasing Russian obstructions, and for each Chair, Russia escalated its obstruction.

Denmark — the sixth FSC Chair in a row to face this obstruction — tried to accommodate Russian objections and continue the dialogue — a dialogue that is

clearly mandated by our Ministers. And it was only after several weeks of outright rejection that we have reached this current state.

Now, we have heard from the Russian delegation this morning and also from Belarus that we need to strictly follow the rules that have been set out for us and that we need to return to “foundational bedrock.” I would suggest that they pull back a little bit from trying to find sub-paragraphs buried within the rules of procedures to disrupt this forum and return instead to something bigger-- a true bedrock of this organization. Let’s go to the *Helsinki Final Act* and start right at the beginning in Section 1(a)I.: “the participating states will respect each other’s sovereign equality... and territorial integrity.” And section 1(a)II.: “The participating states will refrain in their mutual relations as well as in international relations in general from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any State.”

Let us return to dialogue and talk about the substantive issues that our ministers have mandated we discuss here.

Thank you, Mr. Chair