



PMSCs represent an increasingly important security phenomenon

Statement by Ambassador Andrej Benedejčič, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Slovenia, on the occasion of the Security Dialogue on Private Military and Security Companies (PMSCs), at the 905th Meeting of the OSCE Forum for Security Co-operation, Vienna, 23 January 2019

Mr. Chairperson,

Let me start by congratulating the Swiss side for bringing this important topic to the attention of the Forum for Security Co-operation. I would also like to thank all the panelists for their statements. Private Military and Security Companies are increasingly present in our lives. In addition to what has been said on behalf of the EU, I would like to point out that in Slovenia private security companies employ almost as many personnel as the police force and are even used to protect our nuclear installations.

It is also for this reason that Slovenia has been supporting the Montreux Document since 2012 and that last June, during the Slovenian FSC Chairmanship, I moderated a panel on PMSCs, as part of a Side Event before the Annual Discussion on the Implementation of the OSCE Code of Conduct. As mentioned in the concept note that the Swiss FSC Chairmanship circulated before this meeting, that event was also used to launch a special paper by the Geneva-based Centre for Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF), which analyzed the information provided by the participating States since 2009, when it became possible to report on PMSCs through the Annual Information Exchange. The paper highlighted a number of challenges that were already mentioned in detail by the Assistant State Secretary Olivieri in her presentation. In addition to what she said, I would just like to flag a lack of full information, since only 13 out of 57 participating States decided to include information on PMSCs in their returns.

The issue of the PMSCs was also addressed at one of the Working Sessions of last year's Annual Implementation Discussion. In this connection, a number of recommendations were made, including the need for greater dialogue and the need for the OSCE to promote best practices. It was pointed out that greater use should be made of the OSCE field presences and more effort invested in awareness-raising. The PMSCs should be also more clearly defined and categorized.

I am referring to these past discussions for two reasons: first, to remind ourselves of the work that has been already done within the OSCE and, second, to emphasize the need to maintain continuous attention to this issue. This Security Dialogue therefore represents an important step in ensuring the continuity of effort and in highlighting additional challenges related to the PMSCs. The fact that this is also the first Security Dialogue of the Swiss FSC Chairmanship just goes to underline the leading role of Switzerland on this topic, which is widely recognized and highly appreciated.

I would therefore like to conclude by addressing a question to Dr. Jelena Aparac of OHCHR. In your statement you identified gender dimension of the PMSCs as one of the future areas of interest for the UN Working Group on the use of mercenaries. This issue was also addressed during last year's Side Event at the OSCE. In this connection, it was pointed out that the PMSCs provide a work environment that is very male dominated and mostly poorly paid. I would therefore like to ask you how you see the challenge of promoting a gender perspective in such circumstances.

Thank you.