

**Chairmanship: Canada**

**1062nd PLENARY MEETING OF THE FORUM**

1. Date: Wednesday, 15 November 2023 (in the Neuer Saal and via video teleconference)

Opened: 10 a.m.

Closed: 12.25 p.m.

2. Chairperson: Ambassador J. Kinnear

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

Agenda item 1: GENERAL STATEMENTS

- (a) *Russian war of aggression against Ukraine*: Ukraine (FSC.DEL/418/23), United Kingdom (FSC.DEL/417/23 OSCE+), United States of America (FSC.DEL/412/23), Spain-European Union (with the candidate countries Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Ukraine; the potential candidate country Georgia; the European Free Trade Association countries Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway, members of the European Economic Area; as well as Andorra and San Marino, in alignment) (FSC.DEL/413/23), Canada

- (b) *Special military operation to denazify and demilitarize Ukraine*: Russian Federation (FSC.DEL/424/23/Add.1) (FSC.DEL/424/23), United States of America, Canada, Ukraine

Point of order: United States of America, Chairperson

Agenda item 2: ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- (a) *Update on the activities of the Chair of the OSCE Structured Dialogue Informal Working Group in 2022 and 2023 (CIO.GAL/84/23 Restr.)*: Finland, Spain-European Union (FSC.DEL/414/23), Sweden, Slovakia, Canada, Russian Federation (FSC.DEL/425/23), Belarus (FSC.DEL/420/23 OSCE+), Austria, Ukraine, Germany (FSC.DEL/415/23 OSCE+), France

- (b) *Introduction of voluntary reporting on children and armed conflict by the OSCE Group of Friends on Children and Armed Conflict: Belgium (also on behalf of Albania, Italy, Norway and Poland)*
- (c) *22nd meeting of the Commission of the participating States established under 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 3 November 2023: Albania (FSC.DEL/423/23 OSCE+)*
- (d) *Announcement of a voluntary contribution to the Information Management and Reporting System (iMARS) project: United States of America*
- (e) *Suspension by a number of States Parties of their obligations under the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe, and the Russian Federation's withdrawal from the Treaty: Russian Federation (FSC.DEL/426/23), Belarus (FSC.DEL/419/23 OSCE+), Germany (FSC.DEL/416/23 OSCE+), United States of America*
- (f) *Remarks on the mandate of the Forum for Security Co-operation and the Rules of Procedure of the OSCE: Chairperson (Annex)*

4. Next meeting:

Wednesday, 22 November 2023, at 10 a.m., in the Neuer Saal and via video teleconference



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**1062nd Plenary Meeting**

FSC Journal No. 1068, Agenda item 2(f)

**STATEMENT BY  
THE CHAIRPERSON**

I would like to make some remarks on questions raised concerning both the mandate of the Forum for Security Co-operation (FSC) and the rules of procedure applicable to joint meetings of the FSC and the Permanent Council.

The Chairperson does not share the view expressed by one participating State that the mandate of the FSC should be restricted to a narrow list of topics and be limited to arms control-related subjects. This is particularly true given that the current political climate within the Organization – a climate created by Russia’s war of aggression against Ukraine – is not conducive to a constructive discussion on that narrow list of topics.

I wish to underscore that such a narrow interpretation is also not borne out by the OSCE documents and decisions that lay out the FSC’s mandate. The Forum was established under the Helsinki Document 1992 (Decision V). The description of its mandate in that document includes a reference to consultations and co-operation “on matters related to security”. It is further stipulated there that participating States “will develop consultation, goal-oriented continuing dialogue and co-operation in the field of security”. In Decision No. 7/11, adopted in Vilnius in December 2011, the Ministerial Council instructed the FSC, in accordance with its mandate, to “further promote the discussion in the Security Dialogue on current security issues”.

These provisions make it quite clear that a broad range of topics related to security can and should be considered highly relevant to the Forum’s mandate, and that the FSC is tasked with discussing “current security issues”.

As we saw in our discussion last week, the mental health impacts of war constitute an important current security issue, and the topic offered a valuable opportunity to exchange best practices and to identify opportunities for co-operation. Mental health, as we heard, affects the readiness, well-being, operational effectiveness and resilience of military personnel, and addressing mental health issues is essential for modern military organizations to support their fighting force.

It is regrettable that a statement issued by the Russian Federation (FSC-PC.DEL/51/23, dated 8 November 2023) on last week’s joint meeting of the FSC and the Permanent Council simply made the bald assertion that the Security Dialogue topic was

outside the Forum's mandate and failed to address the very clear references to that mandate presented in the concept note (FSC-PC.DEL/50/23 OSCE+, dated 30 October 2023).

Allow me to reiterate that one area that the FSC is very specifically tasked with working on is the Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security (DOC.FSC/1/95). The Code of Conduct requires that participating States ensure that their armed forces personnel are able to enjoy and exercise their human rights and fundamental freedoms as reflected in OSCE documents and international law. This includes ensuring that all military personnel are able to enjoy "the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health", in accordance with Article 12 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

Moreover, the 1949 Geneva Conventions and their Additional Protocols of 1977, along with other instruments of international humanitarian law and customary law, set forth the manifold requirements to protect and care for the wounded and sick, civilians and military personnel alike, in situations of armed conflict.

In view of these evident linkages to both the first and third dimensions of security, it seems clear to the Chairperson that our dialogue on the mental health impacts of war last week was an excellent example of the type of discussion that joint meetings of the FSC and the Permanent Council are designed to facilitate and enable.

Consequently, claims in the aforementioned statement by the Russian Federation that the organization of last week's joint meeting was "illegitimate" or a "political trick" are groundless and unwarranted. We encourage all participating States to adhere to their OSCE commitments and to engage in good faith in "goal-oriented continuing dialogue and co-operation in the field of security", as the FSC was mandated to do in the Helsinki Document 1992.

With regard to the rules that apply to joint meetings of the FSC and the Permanent Council, these are to be found in chapter IV.2(D) of the Rules of Procedure of the OSCE, which is a distinct section dedicated to this special type of meeting.

Paragraphs IV.2(D)2 and IV.2(D)3 clearly set out which specific rules applicable to Permanent Council and FSC meetings are also to apply to the joint meeting format.

These paragraphs do not indicate that the rules of procedure for the FSC or the Permanent Council are otherwise applicable to a joint meeting of the Forum and the Council.

The general provisions on the conduct of meetings of decision-making bodies are to be found in chapter IV.1(C) of the Rules of Procedure. While paragraph IV.1(C)1 stipulates that such meetings are to be conducted in accordance with an agenda, there is no requirement for the agenda to have been agreed on. Paragraph IV.1(C)5 states that the Chairperson must ensure the good order and smooth running of meetings – that is, it is for the Chairperson to decide how to proceed if an objection or point of order is raised by a participating State.

In closing, I would like to thank the Secretariat, in particular Conference and Language Services and the FSC Support Unit, for their highly professional and impartial advice and support provided to the Chairperson throughout this trimester. I take this

opportunity to remind participating States that while the Secretariat provides advice and support, the ultimate decision on Security Dialogue topics and the conduct of meetings is the sole responsibility of the Chairperson or Chairpersons.

This statement will be appended to the journal of today's meeting.