

Chairmanship: Canada

1065th PLENARY MEETING OF THE FORUM

1. Date: Wednesday, 13 December 2023 (in the Neuer Saal and via video teleconference)

Opened: 11.05 a.m.

Closed: 12.40 p.m.

2. Chairperson: Ambassador J. Kinnear

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

Agenda item 1: CLOSING SESSION: STATEMENT BY THE
HONOURABLE MÉLANIE JOLY, MINISTER OF
FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF CANADA (BY VIDEO)

Chairperson, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Canada, Brigadier General C. Oberwarth, Spain-European Union (with the candidate countries Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Ukraine; the European Free Trade Association country Liechtenstein, member of the European Economic Area; as well as Andorra and San Marino, in alignment) (FSC.DEL/463/23), United States of America (FSC.DEL/453/23), Germany (FSC.DEL/456/23 OSCE+), Ukraine (FSC.DEL/461/23), Türkiye (FSC.DEL/455/23 OSCE+), Switzerland (FSC.DEL/464/23 OSCE+), Azerbaijan (FSC.DEL/462/23 OSCE+), Albania (FSC.DEL/459/23 OSCE+), Bulgaria (FSC.DEL/466/23 OSCE+), Norway (FSC.DEL/454/23), North Macedonia, Poland (FSC.DEL/457/23 OSCE+), Russian Federation (FSC.DEL/460/23), Armenia (FSC.DEL/465/23 OSCE+), United Kingdom, Cyprus (FSC.DEL/458/23)

Agenda item 2: GENERAL STATEMENTS

None

Agenda item 3: ANY OTHER BUSINESS

(a) *Matter of protocol:* Poland

(b) *Concluding remarks by the Chairperson of the FSC: Chairperson (Annex)*

4. Next meeting:

To be announced



**Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
Forum for Security Co-operation**

FSC.JOUR/1071
13 December 2023
Annex

Original: ENGLISH

1065th Plenary Meeting
FSC Journal No. 1071, Agenda item 3(b)

STATEMENT BY THE CHAIRPERSON

Dear colleagues,

Throughout our Chairmanship, we have endeavoured to foster frank and constructive dialogue in this Forum: because we think dialogue is important, and because we see value in mutual exchange and in sharing of best practices.

But constructive dialogue cannot take place in a vacuum.

Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine is the largest threat to peace in Europe in decades. This is the undeniable reality in which the Forum for Security Co-operation (FSC) is currently operating. We cannot ignore this.

The path to meaningful dialogue from such actions will be long and difficult, and the OSCE will be a critical platform for this.

There are many pressing things for us to talk about, and yet dialogue remains difficult for now. The FSC has served and is serving as a platform to talk about important current security issues, to learn from experts on these topics, and to exchange information and best practices. This is what we have endeavoured to do this semester. We are proud of the relevant topics we chose, and grateful for your active engagement in those discussions.

We regret that two of our dialogues had to be delivered as side events rather than as formal Security Dialogues because of the objection of one participating State. Let me remind everyone that the Russian delegation blocked our Security Dialogue on "International humanitarian law and command responsibility" because we refused to include their speaker – who did not have a legal background – in our panel of international law experts. Russia also blocked the agenda on "Information integrity in the military space", claiming that it was not relevant to the work of this Forum – a claim we strongly disagree with, on grounds laid out in the concept note for that dialogue.

We view these objections as unfounded and obstructionist. They are not in keeping with the good faith and dialogue that this body is intended to further. Indeed, our objective in holding these events as side events, when the Security Dialogues were blocked, was to enable

fruitful discussions and to preserve and protect, as best as we could under the circumstances, the Forum's important role as a platform for dialogue.

As we end our Chairmanship, I confess I wonder what lies ahead for the FSC. On the one hand, its rotational chairmanship makes it rather egalitarian and protects it somewhat from politicization – each of us 57 participating States has an equal opportunity to chair, and to lead this body in discussions. On the other hand, this year has demonstrated that a participating State that wants to impose its will on the Chairmanship at all costs can block agendas on unjustified pretexts.

In the Chairmanship's view, the blocking of FSC agendas constitutes an unacceptable abuse of the consensus principle. When a participating State weaponizes consensus to paralyze the Organization, we find ourselves more and more often pushed to adapt, and this often means using non-consensus modalities to enable discussion to continue.

The last resort use of non-consensus alternatives is a growing trend within the OSCE, as we have all seen over the past two years. If this trend continues, this normalization of non-consensus modalities will undoubtedly change the nature of our Organization over time. Perhaps this is a bad thing, or perhaps it is a good thing. Only time will tell. The Organization will have to adapt to survive and to continue to remain relevant, and it lies in our collective hands to see how this is done.

This statement will be attached to the journal of the meeting.