

Statement by

ENGLISH only

**Ambassador Andris Teikmanis,
State Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Latvia,
at the Opening of the Latvian Chairmanship of the OSCE Forum for Security
Cooperation**

Vienna, 25 April 2012

Distinguished permanent representatives,
Ladies and gentlemen,

It is my honour to open the first meeting of the Forum for Security Cooperation under the Latvian Chairmanship. The OSCE and its Forum for Security Cooperation has proven itself to be a forum for open discussions on political military security aspects in the Euro-Atlantic region. This is a place, where national strategic perceptions and interests, new ideas on a number of security issues meet and seek to find a common ground through the security dialogue, formal and informal discussions. It is important that our deliberations on common challenges are carried out taking into account such international organizations as NATO and the EU. Nowadays, when security environment has an unpredictable nature, it is impossible to look at security policy through a narrow perspective.

With this perception of the FSC work let me turn to our road map for the coming months:

1. At the Astana Summit, our leaders recommitted themselves to the vision of a security community. It should be built on cooperation, transparency, trust and pooling of efforts and resources. Latvia commends these goals and principles keeping in mind that many decades can pass for security community to become a reality. Meanwhile FSC should focus on political military issues and challenges to our security.
2. During the next months we will have a series of very interesting and thought-provoking security dialogues that are reflecting our wider approach to political military issues. We will have presentations on strategic security environment, democratic control over armed forces, issues pertinent to protracted conflicts, the role of the Common Security and Defence Policy missions of the EU, capacity building and reform issues.
3. Of course, this list of security dialogues is not final. We urge participating states to continue offering speakers and truly thank all those who have already come up with their contributions. The Forum could also benefit from security dialogues and presentations on, for example, defence concepts and plans, reforms in armed forces, development of capabilities, and associated financial implications.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

4. The ambitions for tangible solutions of protracted conflicts should not be lessened. We fully support the OSCE activities to resolve these frozen conflicts in Georgia, Moldova and the conflict dealt with by the OSCE Minsk Group. However, it is essential to use existing and possible tools more actively. In this regard, we are especially concerned about the potential of

conflict stemming from the Nagorno–Karabakh. The OSCE should closer monitor the situation and provide stronger support for cooperation and negotiations between countries in the region.

5. Transition aspects in Afghanistan will be the subject of a joint FSC-PC meeting just two weeks from now. Following the Vilnius Ministerial Council decision (MC.DEC/4/11), this will be our joint contribution to the OSCE's work relating to transnational threats, first of all strengthening the OSCE's engagement with Afghanistan, and thus invigorating the security in the crucial Central Asian region as well as in the whole OSCE region.
6. Our daily work will be guided by the OSCE Ministerial Council decisions adopted in Vilnius. We will focus our attention to the implementation issues in the areas such as small arms and light weapons, stockpiles of conventional ammunition, the Code of Conduct on politico-military aspects of security, implementation of non-proliferation commitments and the United Nations Security Council Resolutions 1540 and 1325.
7. We will use this time actively to reflect, discuss and review the proposals on the table and will welcome new ones on Vienna Document. Last year it was an important step to open this document for modernization. To carry forward this work we need a cooperative spirit and, indeed, patience. It is a fact that national security for each and every one of us is the priority number one. Confidence building measures serve us as a security strengthening toolbox. If we cannot immediately modernize our toolbox, I urge to use the time and discuss the ways how to do it, what it costs, what instruments are outdated and what new tools we need for strengthening our common security. Several concrete proposals were identified during and in the margins of the recent Annual Implementation Assessment Meeting.

Colleagues,

8. We have some important upcoming monthly highlights. First, in May we have the OSCE Meeting to review the OSCE Plan of Action on SALW. It will be followed by the Experts Level Session on SALW stockpile management, surplus reduction and destruction. The OSCE Partners for Cooperation are kindly invited to participate in these events.

Second, in June we have the Annual Security Review Conference that will enable us to look at the security issues from all angles, take stock of the progress achieved and get a fresh look and inspiration for our further work in the area of arms control and confidence building.

Finally, in July there is an important security event, namely, the Annual Discussion on the Implementation of the Code of Conduct that will give us an opportunity to reflect on the implementation issues in this area and seek ways to better apply the Code of Conduct in the existing security environment.

Let me also highlight in this regard that Latvia will host the regional seminar on the OSCE Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security for the Baltic Sea Region from 18-20 of June in Riga. It will provide an additional forum for security dialogue for the region where

challenges and experiences of implementing the Code of Conduct will be discussed and reviewed.

9. Reiterating the OSCE commitment to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery, we recognize that we can make a significant contribution to furthering the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1540. As we remember, the OSCE's potential role was highlighted by the Athens Ministerial Council Declaration on Non-proliferation and reaffirmed by recent Vilnius Ministerial Council Decision 8/11. It is plausible and highly appreciated that the OSCE is already assisting a number of interested participating States in developing their national action plans on UNSCR 1540 as well as fine-tuning their national legislation in this regard. As such, we would like to concentrate on further awareness-raising amongst policy makers, through regular exchange of information during the FSC.

Dear colleagues,

The Chairmanship is a complex and challenging issue – on the one hand one has to be as neutral as possible and serve as a facilitator, on the other hand one has to have ambitions in order to progress in our common work.

With this I would like to express my gratitude to the Troika that is an invaluable asset to the Chairperson, to our experienced and distinguished FSC coordinators, to the responsive and professional FSC Support Section, and the indispensable Conference Services. I also wish to pay tribute to Kazakhstan, who, after a very demanding and dynamic autumn session, is leaving the FSC Troika, and to welcome the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia as a new member of the Troika. Let me also thank Kyrgyzstan for harmoniously and successfully steering the Forum during the winter session.

By acknowledging the importance of active involvement of the Partners for Co-operation in the work of the Forum, Latvia, following the example of the Kyrgyz chairmanship, invites our partners to take part in the plenary meetings and welcomes them as observers to the meetings of the working groups.

After all, the work in the FSC is a team effort. We could not think of chairing the forum without the support of all of you and everybody on board.

Dear colleagues,

In Latvia we have a tradition to offer the bread for the beginning of the road to ensure the strength, success and a good tail-wind!

Thank you.