



Permanent Representation
of the Republic of Cyprus
to the OSCE, Vienna

FSC



Chair of the
OSCE Forum for Security Co-operation
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**Closing Statement by Mr Andreas Louka,
Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Defence
of the Republic of Cyprus
At the 1073rd Plenary Meeting of the
Forum for Security Co-operation
13 March 2024**

Madame Secretary General,

Distinguished Ambassadors,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am deeply honoured to address the Closing Session of the Forum for Security Cooperation under the Chairpersonship of the Republic of Cyprus, which gives me the opportunity to share some reflections on the work undertaken by our delegation.

Cyprus undertook the Chairpersonship of this forum within a challenging period for the OSCE. Even though, we would have liked to see the Forum for Security Co-operation focus on the wide range of defence and security topics covered by its mandate, it was evident from the outset, that business as usual was not an option, for as long as Russia continues its war of aggression against Ukraine; a war which has had a devastating impact on the country and its people, as well as on the security and stability of the region.

Cyprus firmly believes that the use of force cannot and should not replace the rule of law, based also on our past tragic experiences. Respect for international law is imperative and as such, Ukraine's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity, within its internationally recognized borders, must be respected. Revisionist policies and the use of force, have no place in the 21st century.

To this end, the efforts by the Cyprus Chairpersonship aimed first and foremost, at advancing a meaningful dialogue among participating States, in order to preserve the effective functioning of the OSCE in full respect of the UN Charter and the OSCE principles and commitments.

This objective was behind the choice of the topics of our Security Dialogues, which we are pleased to say, were welcomed by the overwhelming majority of Participating States and resulted in a constructive exchange of views, thus proving that this Forum continues to be a unique platform to address politico - military issues in the OSCE area and beyond.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We started our Chairpersonship by focusing on Humanitarian Mine Action, with a special focus on Victim Assistance. Through this initiative, we raised awareness and shared best practices from different stakeholders on assistance to victims of Landmines and Explosive Remnants of War.

The second topic that we brought to this Forum was that of Human Security in Armed Conflicts: Protection against gender - based violence. Through these discussions we aimed to table recommendations, such as ensuring the obligations of participating States under International Humanitarian Law as foreseen in the Geneva Conventions, advancing the representation of women in peace processes and supporting survivors in conflict and post - conflict settings.

These deliberations were both timely and relevant, taking into account that this year we mark the 30th anniversary of the Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security and considering the current security situation in our region.

Another prominent feature of the Cypriot FSC Chairpersonship was our close cooperation with the Maltese OSCE Chairmanship in Office. This was especially evident during the joint meeting of both decision - making bodies of the Organization, the FSC and the Permanent Council, where we examined the complex linkages between security, the environment and climate change.

During this initiative, we focused on the effects that natural disasters and climate change have on military infrastructure, capabilities, missions and operations and assessed how natural and man - made disasters stretch the capacities of defense forces. Moreover, we examined the gender – climate - security nexus, in order to understand how the security risks emanating from climate - related factors impact women and men on different levels.

Our final security dialogue took place last week and focused on Women, Peace and Security: Integrating Gender Perspective when fulfilling the OSCE politico - military commitments and activities. We all acknowledge the importance of the WPS agenda, as a cross cutting priority in the deliberations of this Forum. Evidently, gender equality is fundamental for peace, security and stability since the effects of conflict have an immense impact on women and girls.

Last but not least, in an effort to commemorate the International Women’s Day 2024, the Cyprus Chair of the FSC, together with the OSCE Chairpersonship of Malta and the OSCE Secretariat Gender Issues Programme, organized a side event on the 7th of March, aiming to assess the role of men in gender equality.

The aim of this initiative was to further enrich discussions on the engagement and active contribution of men in achieving gender equality, based on the common understanding that this issue does not only concern women, but should be considered a shared responsibility.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Despite the grave challenges, our Organisation remains the most important regional platform of dialogue and cooperation. It was created with the aim to prevent war and build bridges.

Thus, in conclusion and as a general message of our Chairpersonship, I would like to reiterate the importance of this Organization, but also the need to preserve multilateralism and our values, upon which the Rules - based order are founded.

Thank you.