
Chairmanship: Sweden**1316th PLENARY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL**

1. Date: Thursday, 27 May 2021 (in the Neuer Saal and via video teleconference)

Opened: 10.05 a.m.
Suspended: 1 p.m.
Resumed: 3 p.m.
Closed: 5.20 p.m.

2. Chairperson: Ambassador U. Funered

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

Agenda item 1: REPORT BY THE HEAD OF THE OSCE MISSION TO SKOPJE

Chairperson, Head of the OSCE Mission to Skopje (PC.FR/16/21 OSCE+), Russian Federation (PC.DEL/832/21 OSCE+), Portugal-European Union (with the candidate countries Albania, Montenegro and Serbia; the country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate country Bosnia and Herzegovina; the European Free Trade Association countries Iceland and Liechtenstein, members of the European Economic Area; as well as Georgia, in alignment) (PC.DEL/842/21), United Kingdom, Turkey (PC.DEL/810/21 OSCE+), United States of America (PC.DEL/808/21), Norway (PC.DEL/817/21), North Macedonia

Agenda item 2: REPORT BY THE HEAD OF THE OSCE MISSION TO MOLDOVA

Chairperson, Head of the OSCE Mission to Moldova (PC.FR/16/21 OSCE+), Russian Federation (PC.DEL/833/21 OSCE+), Portugal-European Union (with the candidate countries Albania, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia; the country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate country Bosnia and Herzegovina; the European Free Trade Association countries Iceland and Liechtenstein, members of the European Economic Area; as well as Andorra and Georgia, in alignment)

(PC.DEL/843/21), United Kingdom, Turkey (PC.DEL/838/21 OSCE+), United States of America (PC.DEL/809/21), Ukraine (PC.DEL/845/21), Norway (PC.DEL/816/21), Georgia (PC.DEL/812/21 OSCE+), Moldova (Annex 1)

Agenda item 3: REVIEW OF CURRENT ISSUES

Chairperson

- (a) *Russia's ongoing aggression against Ukraine and illegal occupation of Crimea*: Ukraine (PC.DEL/813/21), Portugal-European Union (with the candidate countries Albania, Montenegro and North Macedonia; the European Free Trade Association countries Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway, members of the European Economic Area; as well as Georgia and Moldova, in alignment) (PC.DEL/841/21), United Kingdom (Annex 2), Turkey (PC.DEL/839/21 OSCE+), United States of America (Annex 3), Canada, Switzerland (Annex 4)
- (b) *Deteriorating situation in Ukraine and continued non-implementation by the Ukrainian authorities of the Minsk agreements*: Russian Federation (PC.DEL/815/21), Switzerland, Ukraine, Chairperson
- (c) *Aggression of Azerbaijan against Artsakh and Armenia with the direct involvement of Turkey and foreign terrorist fighters*: Armenia (Annex 5)
- (d) *Human rights violations in Latvia*: Russian Federation (PC.DEL/819/21) (PC.DEL/820/21), Belarus (PC.DEL/822/21 OSCE+), Latvia (Annex 6)
- (e) *Violation by Armenia of the provisions of the trilateral statement of 10 November 2020*: Azerbaijan (Annex 7), Turkey (PC.DEL/834/21 OSCE+)
- (f) *First anniversary of the death of Mr. G. Floyd*: United States of America (PC.DEL/824/21) (PC.DEL/825/21), Canada, Russian Federation (PC.DEL/823/21), United Kingdom

Agenda item 4: REPORT ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE
CHAIRPERSON-IN-OFFICE

- (a) *Visit by the Chairperson-in-Office to Serbia and Montenegro from 24 to 26 May 2021*: Chairperson
- (b) *Briefing on the priority of the Swedish OSCE Chairpersonship for May 2021*: Chairperson
- (c) *2021 OSCE-wide Conference on Combating the Threat of Illicit Drugs and the Diversion of Chemical Precursors, entitled "Addressing Drug Trafficking and Related Organized Crime by Following the Money", to be held via video teleconference on 1 June 2021*: Chairperson

- (d) *Seminar on “Conflict resolution within the OSCE: Opportunities of the OSCE Court of Conciliation and Arbitration”, to be held in Vienna and via video teleconference on 1 June 2021: Chairperson*
- (e) *Ambassadorial retreat to be held near Vienna on 13 July 2021: Chairperson*

Agenda item 5: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY GENERAL

- (a) *Update on the COVID-19 situation across the OSCE executive structures: Director of the Conflict Prevention Centre (SEC.GAL/71/21 OSCE+)*
- (b) *Video message by the Secretary General to the 131st Session of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, held in Hamburg, Germany, and via video teleconference, on 21 May 2021: Director of the Conflict Prevention Centre (SEC.GAL/71/21 OSCE+), Russian Federation*
- (c) *Meeting between the Secretary General and the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Azerbaijan, H.E. Mr. Jeyhun Bayramov, held in Vienna on 25 May 2021: Director of the Conflict Prevention Centre (SEC.GAL/71/21 OSCE+)*
- (d) *Visit by the Secretary General to Ukraine from 25 to 29 May 2021: Director of the Conflict Prevention Centre (SEC.GAL/71/21 OSCE+)*
- (e) *Participation by the Secretary General in a retreat with the heads of the OSCE institutions and the Secretary General of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, to be held in Denmark in the week beginning 31 May 2021: Director of the Conflict Prevention Centre*
- (f) *OSCE Conflict Cycle Seminar entitled “Ten years after Vilnius: Advancing an inclusive ‘whole-of-OSCE’ approach to prevent violent conflict and build sustainable peace”, held via video teleconference from 17 to 19 May 2021: Director of the Conflict Prevention Centre*

Agenda item 6: ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- (a) *International conference on “Torture Prevention in the Criminal Justice System: The roles and responsibilities of police and other law enforcement officials”, to be held via video teleconference on 2 June 2021: Switzerland (also on behalf of Denmark) (PC.DEL/828/21 OSCE+)*
- (b) *Adoption of the Rome Declaration by the leaders of the G20 and other States at the Global Health Summit, held in Rome on 21 May 2021: Italy (Annex 8), Russian Federation (PC.DEL/826/21)*

4. Next meeting:

Thursday, 3 June 2021, at 10 a.m., in the Neuer Saal and via video teleconference



**Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
Permanent Council**

PC.JOUR/1316
27 May 2021
Annex 1

Original: ENGLISH

1316th Plenary Meeting
PC Journal No. 1316, Agenda item 2

**STATEMENT BY
THE DELEGATION OF MOLDOVA**

Madam Chairperson,
Excellencies,

We welcome Mr. Claus Neukirch, Head of the OSCE Mission to Moldova, back to the Permanent Council. The delegation of the Republic of Moldova took note of the presented report.

Before going into details concerning the report, we would like to draw the Mission's attention to use accurately such terms as "shuttle diplomacy", "internal boundary line", "Transnistrian militia", "the implementation of the agreement on telecommunication remains complicated due to legal challenges" in the reports, bearing in mind the OSCE Mission to Moldova mandate. The use of such terminology could lead to misinterpretation and misunderstanding of the real situation on the ground.

Based on the report, we want to make the following remarks:

From the outset, we would like to highlight the visits to the Republic of Moldova paid by Swedish OSCE Chairperson-in-Office, Minister Ms. Ann Linde and the Special Representative for the Transnistrian settlement process, Ambassador Thomas Mayr-Harting, as well the upcoming visit of the mediators and observers, and commend them for their efforts in advancing the conflict settlement in this challenging period of the COVID-19 pandemic.

We would like to thank the former Albanian Chairmanship for the support in the Transnistrian settlement process during 2020, a year full of challenges due to the COVID-19 pandemic. We also thank the OSCE participating States for the reconfirmation of the main objective of the "5+2" format to attain a comprehensive, peaceful, and sustainable settlement of the Transnistrian conflict based on the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Moldova within its internationally recognized borders with a special status for the Transnistrian region.

Since the last report at the Permanent Council in October 2020 the situation on the ground has not changed significantly. The report of the Head of Mission to Moldova is

mainly focused on the last two months' developments and overlooks to present the situation since last address at the Permanent Council.

Although the Moldova authorities have committed in good faith in promoting confidence-building measures and implementing the Berlin-plus agreements, unconstitutional regime continues its provocative actions, keeping the population of the region as hostages, promoting a false agenda for discussions, aiming to deflect the attention from the real situation on the ground and the main objective of the "5+2" format, and namely the political settlement of the Transnistrian conflict.

We have to recall that since the beginning of the pandemic, Tiraspol has maintained the same restrictions on the free movement of several categories of citizens. The perpetuation of this state of affairs has raised serious concerns in the context that such restrictions were not imposed on the right bank of the Nistru River. Despite the more serious pandemic situation in the eastern districts of the country, the representatives of the region (from Tiraspol) travelled without any impediments on the territory of the country as well as also abroad. Moreover, authorities in Chişinău continue to provide humanitarian assistance to the population in the eastern districts of the country, such as the transfer of patients in serious condition to hospitals on the right bank of the Nistru River, medical and protective equipment, anti-COVID-19 vaccine etc. Although Tiraspol's regime has suspended restrictions related to the free movement until the 1 July, there is no certainty/guarantee that the abusive restrictions will not be re-introduced. We have to reiterate that the quarantine regime established by Tiraspol was not linked to the management of the pandemic itself, but it was a pretext to install abusive control and restrictions of the flow of the people, goods and transport thus isolating the region from the rest of the country. We regret that the false arguments put forward by Tiraspol are invoked/accepted as such in the Mission's report. As we stated at the previous Permanent Council meetings, there are plenty of arguments that the restrictions have nothing to do with the pandemic situation and are being used in the interests of the separatist regime.

There is no doubt that the efforts should be focused on the freedom of movement and we should take note of the strong asymmetry against this backdrop. The problem should be addressed with a keen sense of responsibility by Tiraspol. All the people should be able to move around the country without any restrictions.

Through such an obstructive approach, along with recurrent public statements of the Tiraspol regime concerning its objective to "obtain international recognition" or "quasi-legitimation", the policy of small steps and confidence-building measures is being compromised.

We would like to encourage the Mission to continue to pay more attention to the situation on the administrative line, particularly concerning the freedom of movement and inform the participating States on regular basis. We reiterate that Tiraspol's tactics "making problems to later solve them" should be firmly discouraged.

The human rights situation in the region continues to be alarming and has worsened especially during the pandemic. Fundamental human rights and freedoms are seriously violated, including by instrumentalizing the notion of "extremism" in order to impede freedom of expression and freedom of association, as well as the notion of "illegal crossing of

the border” for crossing the internal administrative line, expulsions of people from their locality, intimidation and persecution for critical opinion against the regime in Tiraspol.

In this regard, we regret that in today’s report there is no follow up on the other cases brought to the attention of the OSCE Mission to Moldova by the Moldovan authorities which in our view are also important. The European Court of Human Rights has delivered 41 judgements on cases related to the Transnistrian region that need to be executed. Therefore, constant political attention, monitoring and appropriate reactions are needed. In case of further degradation, sanctions mechanisms should be on the agenda. At the same time, the Mission reports on a purely criminal case of a person who was involved in abduction on two Moldovan citizens, and sentenced by Moldovan court not for “alleged” kidnapping and torturing but for the proved criminal actions that the respective person committed. In this respect, there should be a clear differentiation between the case of Samonii and the case of Oleg Horjan, leader of an opposition party from the Transnistrian region, whose fundamental rights have been severely violated by Tiraspol’s regime, being detained on clear political grounds.

Madam Chairperson,

Regarding the implementation of the Berlin-plus package, as we stated before among the longstanding problems, we would like to mention for example the functioning of the Latin script schools in the Transnistrian region. There are premises that had been taken in an abusive way by Tiraspol regime in 2004 and this problem remains unsolved. We highlight the need for a normal, unhindered conditions for their functioning. Another problem refers to the lack of free and unhindered access of the farmers from the Dubăsari region to their farmlands on the Tiraspol-Râbnîța road. There are some issues on the agenda which Tiraspol continues to politicize excessively, advancing illegal options in terms of the national and international laws and obligations, which we cannot consider in a responsible manner. These refer to: (a) the so-called neutral driving licences; It should be clear that only the national and international ones apply, and the Moldovan authorities created all necessary conditions that allow the population from the left bank of the Nistru river to obtain an internationally recognized driving licence. As of today, around 40,000 of residents of the region received national driving licences; (b) the telecommunications do not only involve the assignment of agreed frequency bands, but also require compliance with the national regulations and international standards in the field, such as compliance with licencing conditions, authorized data processing, elimination of harmful interference, interactions, and good faith in conducting operational investigation activities, etc. The issue of functioning of banking accounts of the economic entities from the left bank that exceeds the Berlin-plus agreements is a priority for Tiraspol, aiming at getting access to the market of international banking services and operations, by ignoring and limiting the Republic of Moldova’s security concerns and international commitments. We stress once more – it is not possible to advance on this issue while Tiraspol is defying the national and international law.

We reiterate that Chişinău remains open to constructive discussions of all these issues in the “5+2” format. We should all work together to bring the Transnistrian region of my country out of self-isolation and help the population on both banks of the Nistru River to cope with this pandemic, but also to overcome differences that hinder progress in the overall settlement process.

On politico-military dimension, we would like to emphasize the importance of the principles of co-operation between the OSCE Mission to Moldova and the Joint Control Commission (JCC), according to which the Mission should not only gather information about the incidents that violate the Security Zone regime, but also participate in the investigation of the incidents and share its findings with all the delegations to the JCC and the OSCE participating States. We reiterate that the OSCE Mission should fully fulfil its mandate.

Regarding the withdrawal of the Russian troops and ammunition from the territory of the Republic of Moldova, we note with regret the lack of progress on this issue. Our position on the complete and unconditional withdrawal of the foreign military forces, including withdrawal and/or destruction of ammunition from the Cobasna stockpiles remains unchanged. We want to recall that the continued presence of foreign military forces and armaments on the territory of the Republic of Moldova without its consent and against its express will, violates the country's independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity contradicting in this respect the Constitution of the Republic of Moldova that prohibits the stationing of any foreign military troops on national territory and the fundamental principles of international law and the United Nations Charter.

With regard to the peacekeeping mechanism (established by the Moldovan-Russian Agreement dated 21 July 1992), we reiterate that it has long ago achieved its goal of separating the parties and ensuring of the ceasefire. We are interested in starting the consultations with interested international partners on the transformation of the current peacekeeping arrangement into a multinational civilian mission under an appropriate international mandate.

Madam Chairperson,

Let me express our support for the activities of the Mission in providing assistance and expertise on issues related to human rights on the right bank of the Nistru River, rule of law and civil society. We highly value the efforts of the Mission in facilitating co-operation of the Moldovan authorities with relevant OSCE institutions. The Moldovan Government will continue its efforts aimed at the socio-economic development and inclusiveness of the Gagauzia region and of all ethnic minorities. The Republic of Moldova will remain fully engaged in the implementation of its OSCE commitments and will actively promote the main principles of our Organization.

Finally, we would like to reconfirm that the Moldovan authorities remain committed to provide maximal support to the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights limited election observation mission in fulfilling its mission and will continue to take all necessary steps that the up-coming parliamentary elections are conducted in full conformity with international norms, standards and commitments, as well as national legislation.

I ask that this statement be attached to the journal of the day.



1316th Plenary Meeting

PC Journal No. 1316, Agenda item 3(a)

**STATEMENT BY
THE DELEGATION OF THE UNITED KINGDOM**

Thank you Madam Chairperson. My statement this week will focus on the vital importance of transparency.

The United Kingdom continues to have significant concerns about the heightened tensions caused by the recent increased Russian military activity on Ukraine's border and in illegally annexed Crimea. We are disappointed that Russia did not, and still chooses not to, engage with the OSCE processes and mechanisms available to provide necessary transparency with regards to this activity. This includes explanation as to why Russia does not think its activities required notification under Chapter V of the Vienna Document, or were subject to observation under Chapter VI of Vienna Document. We are also disappointed that Russia has still not sought to address the concerns Ukraine raised regarding the military build-up near its borders and in illegally annexed Crimea, under Chapter III of the Vienna Document.

We continue to monitor closely the return of some Russian forces to their permanent base locations, which is taking longer than the announced deadline set by Russian Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu of 1 May. The United Kingdom calls again on Russia to provide transparency relating to the withdrawal of forces and to ensure the presence of any remaining forces do not contribute further to an escalation in tensions.

As I noted last week, transparency about the situation on the ground in the Russian-instigated and Russian-fuelled conflict also remains critical, yet the Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine (SMM) continues to face unacceptable challenges to implementing its mandate, including restrictions on its freedom of movement in the segment of the Ukraine-Russia State border outside Ukrainian government control. The establishment of genuinely comprehensive monitoring of the entire segment of the State border outside Ukrainian government control is essential.

As well as the SMM, the OSCE Observer Mission to two Russian border checkpoints is another OSCE tool to enhance transparency. In previous discussions on the extension of its mandate, we have pointed out the clear disadvantages of a shorter mandate period for the Observer Mission and asked legitimate questions of Russia about why they think a two-month period is preferable for the running of the Mission. Their refusal to answer means we can only conclude that this is yet another act by Russia to undermine transparency and

impede OSCE efforts to resolve the conflict. We recall that the Minsk agreements call for monitoring of the entire segment of the Ukraine-Russia State border temporarily outside Ukrainian government control. The Observer Mission is a far cry from comprehensive monitoring, yet it still provides some important transparency on the situation at two checkpoints along that border. This transparency, and the confidence-building impact it has, is needed all the more following the biggest movement of Russian troops along Ukraine's border since 2014. We therefore repeat our call once again for a full extension of the Observer Mission's mandate by four months to ensure it can continue to effectively carry out its important mandate.

Lastly, we wish to raise concerns about the lack of transparency regarding the security and humanitarian situation in Crimea. We have repeatedly called for the OSCE SMM's unrestricted access throughout Ukraine, including Crimea, as is provided for in its mandate. Moreover, the United Kingdom continues to call on Russia to grant international human rights monitoring missions access to Crimea. Over 100 Ukrainian political prisoners remain in detention in Russia and Crimea, including Ivan Yatskin who was sentenced last week to 11 years in a maximum security colony. Many prisoners are held in inhumane conditions, subject to overcrowding, poor sanitation and insufficient natural light and air. The United Kingdom is appalled by this treatment and calls on Russia to release all Ukrainian political prisoners immediately.

We reiterate our support for the Minsk agreements to deliver a peaceful resolution to the conflict in full respect of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity, and the work of the Trilateral Contact Group and the Normandy Four in this regard. We call on Russia to fulfil its commitments.

Russia must withdraw its military personnel and weapons from the territory of Ukraine; cease its support for the armed formations it backs; and stop access restrictions and intimidation of the SMM in areas held by the Russian-backed armed formations.

The United Kingdom strongly supports Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders, including its territorial waters. We do not and will not recognize Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea. The United Kingdom has consistently stood with Ukraine in opposing all instances of Russian aggression towards Ukraine and we will continue to do so, including through sanctions, together with our international partners.

I request that this statement be added to the journal of the day.



1316th Plenary Meeting
PC Journal No. 1316, Agenda item 3(a)

**STATEMENT BY
THE DELEGATION OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA**

Significant numbers of Russian military forces remain in place along the Russia-Ukraine border, in Russia-occupied Crimea, and in eastern Ukraine along the line of contact within Ukraine. It has been nearly two months since Ukraine invoked the Vienna Document's paragraph 16 risk reduction mechanism with respect to Russia's aggressive and unilateral build-up of military forces in March and April. Moscow refused to provide a substantive response.

Russia has increased tensions in an already volatile region. Thanks to Ukraine's restraint in the face of Russia's military activity, the conflict in the Donbas did not escalate, though violence continues on a daily basis. It is important we remember Ukrainian soldiers and civilians continue to be wounded and killed because of Russia's aggression. We urge Russia to fully reverse its military build-up and recommit to the OSCE-brokered ceasefire.

The situation on the ground is far from calm. On the contrary, after falling to historically low levels last fall, ceasefire violations have steadily increased in recent months. While they remain lower than in some past years, the Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine (SMM) is once again reporting hundreds of daily ceasefire violations on a regular basis.

As the international community sought to reduce tensions surrounding Russia's most recent provocation, Moscow took additional steps to undermine the peaceful resolution of the conflict it continues to foment and fuel in eastern Ukraine. Right now, Russia is pursuing another step which, if implemented, will have a negative impact on the ground: Moscow inexplicably opposes the standard four-month extension of the mandate of the Observer Mission at the Russian checkpoints at Gukovo and Donetsk. Instead it wants to limit the extension to two months.

The Observer Mission – already significantly boxed in by Russia – is a valuable confidence-building tool providing participating States with additional insight into the situation on the ground in eastern Ukraine. A two-month extension would burden the Border Observer Mission with additional administrative complications, further reducing the OSCE's ability to monitor the border, as stipulated in the Minsk Protocol.

We again must ask Russia: What do you seek to hide? As a member of this Permanent Council and a signatory to all three Minsk agreements, Russia made solemn commitments to advance a peaceful resolution of the conflict in eastern Ukraine.

Its actions regarding the Observer Mission clearly call into question statements by Russia implying a real interest in ending the violence in Ukraine and facilitating a political settlement. We urge Russia to reconsider its proposal to cut the mandate of the Observer Mission in half. We see no gain for security and mutual confidence in such a course; we need co-operation and transparency, not unilateralism and veiled threats.

In Crimea, Russia's occupation authorities subject Crimean Tatars, ethnic Ukrainians, and members of other ethnic and religious minority groups on the peninsula to harassment, arrest, detention – even reports of torture – as part of Moscow's campaign to punish peaceful opposition to the occupation. Russia blocks the SMM and international human rights monitoring groups from the peninsula, yet information regarding Russia's repression continues to reach us.

This week marks the fifth anniversary of the disappearance of Ervin Ibragimov, a Crimean Tatar civic activist who has not been seen since he was forced into a van by traffic police in Bakhchisarai on 24 May 2016. He is one of twelve Crimean Tatars who have disappeared without a trace since the occupation began. We ask Russia: Where is Mr. Ibragimov? Why was the investigation into his disappearance closed? Dozens of other critics of the occupation continue to languish in Russian prisons.

Server Mustafayev, the co-ordinator of the Crimean Solidarity human rights movement, is serving a 14-year sentence in a Russian prison in retaliation for his activism to expose the abuses of the occupation. We will not forget any of the Ukrainian political prisoners currently held by Russia, more than 100 in all.

We further condemn Russia's efforts to harass and intimidate Crimean Tatar leaders, including the 24 May request by prosecutors for a nine-year prison sentence in the *in absentia* trial of Mejlis Chairman Refat Chubarov.

We call on Russia to end its occupation of Crimea and to release all Ukrainian political prisoners. We further call on Russia to fulfil the commitments it voluntarily undertook on 5 and 14 September 2014 in Minsk, to remove all military troops and hardware from eastern Ukraine.

Madam Chairperson, the United States fully supports Ukraine's sovereignty, independence, and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders, extending to its territorial waters. We do not, nor will we ever, recognize Russia's purported annexation of Crimea. We join our European and other partners in affirming our Ukraine-related sanctions against Russia will remain in place until Russia fully implements its Minsk commitments and returns full control of Crimea to Ukraine.

Thank you, Madam Chairperson.



1316th Plenary Meeting

PC Journal No. 1316, Agenda item 3(a)

**STATEMENT BY
THE DELEGATION OF SWITZERLAND**

Madam Chairperson,

The OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine (SMM) continues to report an increasing level of violence in the conflict area, ceasefire violations were again registered along the entire contact line. Furthermore, the SMM recorded two instances of the use of Minsk-proscribed heavy weapons. The Mission also continued to observe Minsk-proscribed weapons in areas where they should have been withdrawn, predominately in non-government-controlled areas.

During the reporting period, the SMM confirmed four civilian casualties due to the detonation of explosive objects and shelling, whereof one fatality – a 17-year-old boy who stepped on a mine. The Mission confirmed 28 civilian casualties of which 10 were fatalities in 2021. These figures underline that the civilian population has to pay a high price due to the increasing violence in the conflict area. We renew our call to adhere to the ceasefire. We call on the sides to respect international humanitarian law, which includes the protection of civilians and civilian objects, and to respect human rights obligations. Moreover, we call on the sides to progress on the updated mine clearance plan agreed at the Paris Summit of the Normandy Format in December 2019.

Madam Chairperson,

There was another disturbing report about an explosion near an SMM patrol in the vicinity of the Donetsk Filtration Station, despite security guarantees in place. Furthermore, the SMM's freedom of movement continues to be heavily restricted, predominately in non-government-controlled areas. Since March, the Mission has been registering another worrying trend: It is denied the exchange of its trailers across the line of contact in Donetsk region which further constrains the efficient administration of the Mission. Switzerland condemns any attacks on and restrictions of SMM patrols, as they hinder the Mission to carry out its mandated tasks and hamper its monitoring capacity. We hope that SMM long-range unmanned aerial vehicle flights which are paused for the time being can be resumed soon.

My delegation deplores that the civilian population continues to endure hardships when crossing the contact line. We call for the opening of all checkpoints, without delay.

Madam Chairperson,

We have taken note of the Russian delegation's explanations regarding the extension of the mandate of the Observer Mission at the Russian checkpoints Gukovo and Donetsk. For the record, my delegation would like to repeat that Switzerland has a strong preference for a four-month extension or more. Additionally, we would like to caution against linking the extension of the Border Observer Mission to progress in the Trilateral Contact Group. Whilst the former comes within the purview of the Permanent Council, the latter is not a matter in the Permanent Council's competence.

I would like to request that this statement be added to the journal of the day.

Thank you, Madam Chairperson.



1316th Plenary Meeting
PC Journal No. 1316, Agenda item 3(c)

STATEMENT BY
THE DELEGATION OF ARMENIA

Madam Chairperson,

I should like to begin by informing the Permanent Council that earlier this morning, the Azerbaijani armed forces, illegally present on the sovereign territory of Armenia since 12 May, abducted six Armenian soldiers who had been carrying out engineering work in a border area of Armenia's Gegharkunik region, within the sovereign territory of the Republic of Armenia. This unacceptable and provocative action, committed by the Azerbaijani armed forces in the sovereign territory of Armenia, once again indicates that Azerbaijan has chosen the path of escalating the situation further, its ultimate goal being to seize Armenian territory.

The statement issued immediately afterwards by the Azerbaijani Ministry of Defence claiming that the Armenian armed forces had attempted to infiltrate Azerbaijani territory demonstrates that this act of abduction and hostage-taking was carefully planned in advance. Moreover, the allegations made by the Azerbaijani side defy all logic, since one cannot infiltrate one's own territory. The hasty actions of the Azerbaijani delegation here at the OSCE also clearly attest to the pre-planned nature of this operation, which was duly accompanied by (dis)information back-up and propaganda – we will hear some of that propaganda soon under the current issue raised by that delegation.

Such provocative actions by the politico-military leadership of Azerbaijan are aimed at further aggravating the already tense situation, which could seriously undermine the fragile security situation in the region. It would seem that by mounting such incursions into the sovereign territory of Armenia, Azerbaijan is deliberately trying to trigger a new war. The politico-military leadership of Azerbaijan bears full responsibility for all actions by the Azerbaijani armed forces and their consequences. We strongly condemn the use of force by Azerbaijan to encroach on the territorial integrity and sovereignty of the Republic of Armenia.

Madam Chairperson,

At the last special meeting of the Permanent Council on 25 May, my delegation presented preliminary information about the provocative actions of the Azerbaijani armed forces, as a result of which an Armenian soldier, Junior Sergeant Gevorg Khurshudyan, was fatally wounded while on duty in the immediate vicinity of the village of Verin Shorzha in

Armenia's Gegharkunik Province. This unacceptable and deliberate killing of an Armenian soldier was primarily due to the illegal presence of the Azerbaijani armed forces in the sovereign territory of Armenia, which is a flagrant violation of international law and OSCE principles. The Armenian side has indicated its readiness to conduct an international investigation to clarify all the circumstances of this fatal incident. It is obvious that by refusing to withdraw its armed forces from the sovereign territory of Armenia, Azerbaijan is seeking to further escalate the situation, disrupt the implementation of the trilateral statement of 9 November 2020 and instigate a new war against Armenia proper.

Meanwhile, in an attempt to cover up its illegal military incursion into Armenian territory, Azerbaijan tries to portray this as a border delimitation and/or demarcation process. This is a false narrative and a disinformation tactic that we squarely denounce. We wish to emphasize once again that relying on field commanders and military personnel to conduct delimitation and demarcation of borders is arrant nonsense – rather like putting the cart before the horse. Delimitation and demarcation should be carried out by a joint commission made up of members from both sides, who – in a calm and reasonable environment and drawing on relevant knowledge and expertise – should discuss and agree on contentious issues, which will inevitably arise in such a complex and time-consuming process.

Azerbaijan must stop its aggressive and clearly provocative behaviour and immediately withdraw its troops from the sovereign territory of Armenia.

This blatant violation of Armenia's territorial integrity is a direct consequence of the war of aggression waged by Azerbaijan and its allies against the people of Artsakh in order to deprive the latter of their right to self-determination and of the right to live freely in their native land. The lack of a firm response to the use of force by Azerbaijan as a means of "resolving" the conflict, or to the massive and serious human rights violations perpetrated by Azerbaijan, has further emboldened that country's authoritarian leadership to step up its hostile policy and aggressive posturing towards the Republic of Armenia – now expanded to include attempts to seize Armenian territory, threaten the local Armenian population and deprive them of their livelihood, thereby forcing them to flee their native land.

Azerbaijan's behaviour comes as no surprise to us. However, we were surprised, to say the least, by the appeasing statements that we heard from some participating States at the last special meeting of the Permanent Council. Attempts to gloss over the problematic and unacceptable behaviour of Azerbaijan before, during and after last year's war of aggression, including its violations of the norms of international law, and to avoid calling Azerbaijan to task for its grave crimes and transgressions are not helpful: rather, they make the situation even worse. The conflict is far from over – no matter what Azerbaijan or certain other participating States may claim – and only a comprehensive political settlement based on respect for the fundamental rights and freedoms of the peoples of both Armenia and Artsakh, including the inalienable right of the people of Artsakh to self-determination, could bring stability, security and peace to the region.

Dear colleagues,

The restraint displayed by the Armenian side should not be misinterpreted as a sign of tolerance towards attempts to seize its sovereign territory. The Azerbaijani troops must unconditionally and without further delay withdraw from the territory of Armenia and return

to the initial positions that they occupied on 11 May. The aggressive actions by Azerbaijan inside Armenian sovereign territory give the Republic of Armenia the right to take all necessary and adequate measures to protect its sovereignty and territorial integrity and ensure the security of its population.

The Armenian authorities are currently trying to resolve the situation through negotiations and other political and diplomatic means so as to prevent further escalation and potential casualties. In these efforts, Armenia also relies on the support of its international partners and on the regional and international security mechanisms, not least on the OSCE. In this regard, it should be made clear to Azerbaijan that the participating States will not tolerate breaches of international law and disregard for OSCE principles and commitments. As the world's largest regional security organization, the OSCE should demonstrate consistency on such serious matters. A selective approach, double standards and further appeasement of the aggressor would irreversibly undermine the Organization's credibility.

Madam Chairperson,

In the seven months since the cessation of hostilities in the war of aggression by Azerbaijan against Artsakh and its people, Armenia has been implementing in good faith its commitments under the trilateral statement of 9 November 2020. In contrast, Azerbaijan continues to violate a number of the statement's key provisions, which, in particular, envisage implementation on the part of Azerbaijan.

We have already presented in detail the ongoing flagrant violations by Azerbaijan of the provisions of the trilateral statement, in particular of the first, seventh and eighth paragraphs.

We have also constantly raised here at the Permanent Council the fate of the Armenian prisoners of war and civilian captives being held in Azerbaijan – an issue that remains unresolved despite the fact that paragraph 8 of the trilateral statement clearly stipulates that the Armenian prisoners of war should have been released immediately after the cessation of hostilities.

Numerous calls by the international community notwithstanding, Azerbaijan continues to use Armenian prisoners of war as a tool against Armenia and Artsakh. Moreover, Azerbaijan has brought fabricated criminal charges against them, thereby blatantly violating both the norms of international humanitarian law and its obligations under the trilateral statement of 9 November 2020. The criminal proceedings against Armenian prisoners of war and civilians based on “confessions” of these Armenians in captivity extracted by torture, coercion and physical, psychological and emotional abuse, and in particular the prosecution of Mr. Lyudvik Mkrtychyan and Mr. Alyosha Khosrovyan, captured during the recent aggression of Azerbaijan against Artsakh – all these are tantamount to making a mockery of international humanitarian law, notably the Geneva Conventions of 1949, since “information” thus obtained cannot serve as a basis for criminal prosecution, nor can it have any probative value.

Given the ample evidence of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment and psychological pressure being applied against Armenian prisoners of war and civilian

captives held in Azerbaijan, it is even more urgent that they be immediately released, without any preconditions, and repatriated.

Dear colleagues,

The recent address by the Azerbaijani Foreign Minister to the Permanent Council failed to deliver any convincing message that might corroborate that country's declared intentions of building trust and bringing about reconciliation. Instead, it was a prime example of the Azerbaijani leadership's anti-Armenian rhetoric and propaganda, of its blame-shifting and continuously belligerent policy.

Openly boastful posturing regarding the use of force and of a war of aggression as a means of conflict settlement, attempts to whitewash the war crimes and violations of international law committed by Azerbaijan during last year's war of aggression and earlier in the past, new highly questionable and unfounded allegations against Armenia – these are the defining features of the Azerbaijani Foreign Minister's statement.

Moreover, in a country where there is no credible alternative opinion or sources of verification of information; where the Prosecutor General's Office institutes criminal proceedings on the basis of information obtained under duress; and where the perpetrators of the pogroms in Baku, Kirovabad and Sumgait, and of the massacres in Maragha, Getashen and Shahumyan, which claimed the lives of hundreds of Armenians (including children, women and the elderly) and are conveniently swept under the carpet by the Azerbaijani authorities, have yet to be prosecuted, any allegation against Armenia is nothing but a shoddy propaganda trick.

Madam Chairperson,

On another note and bearing in mind that the issue was raised by some delegations, let me make it clear that the Armenian delegation concurs with the need for the OSCE Unified Budget to be adopted promptly so as to ensure the Organization's normal functioning and proper implementation of the programmatic activities of its structures. This requires, *inter alia*, reaching a consensus on the budget proposals, including the unchanged mandate and activities of the Co-Chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group and the Personal Representative of the Chairperson-in-Office. In this regard, we reiterate Armenia's support for the budget proposals relating to the Minsk Process and the Personal Representative of the Chairperson-in-Office, as introduced by the Secretariat and the Swedish OSCE Chairmanship.

Madam Chairperson, I kindly ask you to attach this statement to the journal of today's meeting.

Thank you.



1316th Plenary Meeting

PC Journal No. 1316, Agenda item 3(d)

**STATEMENT BY
THE DELEGATION OF LATVIA**

Madam Chairperson,

All the accusations that have just been raised by the Russian delegation are groundless: the information provided either is distorted and taken out of context, or is even blatantly false. These accusations have already been refuted by us on numerous previous occasions.

The fact is that, in all countries of the world without exception, the human rights situation can be improved in some way or another – in all countries, including the Russian Federation. And including Latvia, albeit not in relation to the issues just mentioned by the Russian delegation.

There really are disturbing, or, as the Russian delegation puts it, “gross and massive” human rights violations in certain OSCE participating States, including violations of the rights of national minorities, freedom of belief, freedom of speech, freedom of assembly, freedom of movement and the right to due process, among others. However, the alarming human rights violations that may currently be observed in the OSCE area are most definitely not taking place in Latvia.

Speaking of which, I should like to comment on the references to my country by the distinguished representative of Belarus and also by the distinguished representative of the Russian Federation in connection with the flags flying during the Ice Hockey World Championship that is currently being held in Riga. First of all, the decision on the flag to be used to represent the Russian Federation’s team was not taken by Latvia. Secondly, it is true that the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Latvia, H.E. Mr. Edgars Rinkēvičs, and the Mayor of Riga, Mr. Mārtiņš Staķis, decided to raise the historical white-red-white flag of Belarus in the centre of Riga outside the official venues of the Championship. This step was taken by the aforementioned Latvian officials after the interception of Ryanair flight FR4978 from Athens to Vilnius last Sunday as a way of demonstrating solidarity with Belarusian civil society as it fights for democracy in Belarus, and more specifically with the illegally detained journalist Raman Pratasevich and his partner Sofia Sapega, whose immediate release we demand.

Taking down or raising a flag is a diplomatic reaction, whereas intercepting a commercial airliner, that is, a civil aircraft, is not.

The reasons for raising the white-red-white flag in Riga are the real “current issue” that should be concerning us here. The flagrant and outrageous violations of freedom of the media, freedom of assembly, freedom of expression and the safety of journalists that we continue seeing in the countries which spoke before Latvia today under this agenda item are all issues that call for our immediate action.

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. I kindly request that this statement be attached to the journal of the day.



1316th Plenary Meeting
PC Journal No. 1316, Agenda item 3(e)

**STATEMENT BY
THE DELEGATION OF AZERBAIJAN**

Madam Chairperson,

The delegation of Azerbaijan would like to bring to the attention of the Permanent Council the latest violation by Armenia of the provisions of the trilateral statement signed by the leaders of Armenia, Azerbaijan and the Russian Federation on 10 November 2020.

As reported by the Ministry of Defence of Azerbaijan, from 24 to 26 May the positions of the armed forces of Azerbaijan stationed in the Kalbajar and Gadabay districts of Azerbaijan were periodically subjected to fire with the use of small arms from the positions of Armenian armed forces located in the Gegharkunik region of Armenia. No retaliatory fire was opened by the Azerbaijani side, neither there were any losses.

Furthermore, the Ministry of Defence of Azerbaijan reported that on 27 May, at about 3 a.m., two reconnaissance-sabotage groups of the Armenian armed forces, consisting of 9 and 15 servicemen, infiltrated the territory of Azerbaijan in the direction of the Yukhari Ayrım village of the Kalbajar district on the Armenia-Azerbaijan State border. The sabotage groups attempted to plant mines on the supply routes and passages leading to the posts of the Azerbaijani army, and commit other acts of sabotage. As a result of urgent operational measures taken by Azerbaijan's armed forces against both groups, six Armenian servicemen were neutralized, disarmed and detained, while other servicemen retreated. Moreover, several combat vehicles, including tanks of the Armenian armed forces, were congested near the border. As a result of the counter-actions taken by Azerbaijan's armed forces, their movement was suppressed. Currently, the operational situation in this direction is under control of the Azerbaijani side.

These provocations by Armenia represent a clear violation of the trilateral statement of 10 November 2020, the first clause of which envisages a complete ceasefire and a cessation of all hostilities in the former conflict zone.

At the Permanent Council meeting last week, we drew attention to the recent statements by some participating States, in particular the Co-Chair countries of the Minsk Group, who demonstrated unusual interest in connection with the latest incident at the Armenia-Azerbaijan State border. In that regard, we reiterated that border delimitation and demarcation is a bilateral issue that requires quiet diplomacy and called on these participating

States to refrain from making statements that may further complicate an already sensitive situation. In particular, we pointed out that such statements can in no way facilitate a peaceful solution of the issue and, on the contrary, could produce the opposite effect by encouraging Armenia to take provocative actions and to hold on to its unconstructive position.

Irresponsible statements by the Armenian authorities to use force to resolve the issue at the State border with Azerbaijan, which were made immediately after aforementioned statements by some participating States, are illustrative to this end. Apparently such threats made by Armenian high-ranking officials over the past weeks served to prepare the ground for the most recent provocations. In this context, we believe that statements by some participating States on the incident at the State border encouraged Armenia to ultimately resort to violation of the ceasefire envisaged by the trilateral statement and attempt to transfer another sabotage group into the territory of Azerbaijan.

After today's detention of the sabotage groups by Azerbaijan's armed forces, Prime Minister of Armenia N. Pashinyan acknowledged that military servicemen of Armenia were detained when laying mines along the State border. Thus, it appears that instead of positively considering the proposal to establish an inter-State commission to carry out delimitation and demarcation of the entire international border between Armenia and Azerbaijan, Armenia decided to mine these territories in an attempt to undermine efforts to resolve matters related to determination of the State border between the two countries through politico-diplomatic means. We also remind you of Armenia's consistent refusal to honour its obligations under customary international humanitarian law by not releasing the maps of mines planted by Armenia on a massive scale in the liberated territories of Azerbaijan.

We further recall statements made by many participating States calling Azerbaijan to release all so-called prisoners of war (PoWs) and other detainees. Azerbaijan stated clearly that those sent by Armenia to the territory of Azerbaijan with the aim of engaging in sabotage and terrorist activities in the period after the signing of the trilateral statement are not and cannot be considered PoWs in accordance with international humanitarian law and are liable under the criminal law of the Republic of Azerbaijan. Thus, we discouraged these participating States from considering these persons as PoWs. The latest sabotage attempt by Armenia to penetrate the territory of Azerbaijan vividly demonstrates that Armenia has not abandoned its futile attempts to undermine the fragile peace. Now after the detention of this group of six military servicemen of Armenia, we call on those participating States to demonstrate a just and consistent position by condemning the provocative actions of Armenia. We further discourage these participating States from reiterating their old narratives related to so-called PoWs and detainees in Azerbaijan.

It is essential for Armenia to soberly assess efforts aimed at stabilizing the situation and not to rely on miscalculation that could jeopardize the fragile peace in the region established with the signing of the trilateral statement. As we stated repeatedly, Azerbaijan is committed to consolidating peace, security and stability in the region as well as normalizing inter-State relations with Armenia based on the unconditional respect for each other's sovereignty, territorial integrity and inviolability of the internationally recognized borders, and urges Armenia to reciprocate by adopting a similarly constructive position. We proceed from the understanding that all questions, including issues related to demarcation and delimitation process of the State border between the two countries, should be dealt with in

strict compliance with norms and principles of international law. Disagreements arising in this process should be resolved peacefully through politico-diplomatic means, rather than through misusing these issues for political purposes and resorting to provocations such as violation of the ceasefire and sending sabotage groups into the territory of Azerbaijan.

I request that this statement be attached to the journal of the day.

Thank you, Madam Chairperson.



**Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
Permanent Council**

PC.JOUR/1316
27 May 2021
Annex 8

ENGLISH
Original: ITALIAN

1316th Plenary Meeting
PC Journal No. 1316, Agenda item 6(b)

**STATEMENT BY
THE DELEGATION OF ITALY**

Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

On 21 May, the Global Health Summit, a special event organized by the Italian G20 Presidency in collaboration with the European Commission, took place in Rome and online. The work involved 24 countries, 21 Heads of State or Government and 12 international organizations. The breadth and variety of participants, more comprehensive and numerous than at the G20, made the Global Health Summit a particularly important event in the multilateral context, enabling Italy and Europe to exercise leadership on global health issues at this critical stage.

For the first time since the outbreak of the pandemic, the Summit brought together – albeit virtually – the world’s key players on the issues of combating COVID-19, protecting global health and preventing health crises. The live streaming of the event sent a clear and visible political signal to world public opinion about the commitment of the international community.

The discussion among the leaders produced some very important political and practical results. Amongst them, I should like to mention the reaffirmation of the key role of international co-operation and solidarity among countries in overcoming the current crisis.

The countries and organizations represented adopted the Rome Declaration, structured around a Preamble and a set of 16 principles which, although essentially political in nature and scope, lay the foundations for future concrete action by the various players – public and private, the scientific world and civil society – in promoting global health and preventing potential new world health crises. The principles call in particular for enhancing the global health architecture, fostering health-conscious economic and social policies, increasing vaccine production capacity, investing in the training of health personnel and the development of research centres and early warning systems, and promoting new financial instruments to support investment in global health.

The Declaration, which was the product of several challenging negotiating sessions, is a fruitful synthesis of the different interests and positions represented by the countries participating in the negotiations. As emphasized by many of the leaders who spoke, it will be

an important milestone towards ever closer and more tangible co-operation to prevent and effectively address pandemics.

We believe that this outcome of the Global Health Summit demonstrates once again that a multilateral approach is still vital today and capable of producing substantial results, both on controversial issues and on topics where it is easier to find a convergence of views. This is the very essence of multilateralism, to which my country is fully committed: finding joint solutions to joint problems through dialogue that takes account at all times of the need for mutual understanding and a willingness to compromise.

I request that this statement be attached to the journal of the meeting.

Thank you, Madam Chairperson.