



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Forum for Security Co-operation N°1073 Vienna, 13 March 2024

EU Closing Statement

1. Many thanks to Permanent Secretary Louka for his opening remarks.
2. Dear Ambassador, your Chairpersonship was marked by the second tragic commemoration of the beginning of Russia's illegal, unprovoked and unjustifiable war of aggression against Ukraine, with the support of Belarus, as well as Iran and the DPRK. This war, waged by an OSCE participating State, blatantly violates the very principles and commitments of this Organisation and the UN Charter. Week after week and report after report, more and more evidence emerges on Russia's continued deliberate disregard of international law, international humanitarian and human rights law. The EU and its Member States condemn Russia's actions in the strongest possible terms. Against this backdrop Cyprus, in its capacity of FSC Chair, rightly maintained Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine and its devastating repercussions as our key focus also during this trimester. Let us all not forget that it is this war of aggression that is preventing us from engaging in a more comprehensive dialogue in the politico-military dimension.
3. The four Security Dialogues which you organised were all very timely and addressed important matters that the FSC is mandated to deal with. Be it humanitarian mine action, where we see that progress has stalled and is actually reversing, the topic of security and environment which is becoming one of the defining challenges of our times, or the women, peace and security agenda where we still have to deliver on our commitments.
4. We also welcome that the matter of gender equality was a common thread running through all four of the entirely relevant Security Dialogues organised under the Cypriot Chairpersonship. In addition an important side event was dedicated to the topic of the role of men in gender equality. There is still much to do on this matter and prioritising the WPS agenda is one of the more important steps to achieve tangible progress.
5. Moreover, human security in armed conflicts with a focus on protection against gender-based violence was initially on the agenda of the 1069th FSC but in what

now seems to have become its common practice, the Russian Federation blocked the meeting. Considering their pretext, we reiterate that the choice of the speakers is a Chair's prerogative, as it has always been, also before Russia started its illegal, unprovoked and unjustifiable war of aggression and when it chaired the FSC itself. As a matter of fact it is actually Russia who is particularly unwilling to discuss specific topics, consistent with the FSC's mandate, such as the one mentioned or international humanitarian law which it blocked under the previous Canadian Chairpersonship. The fact that the International Criminal Court just last week issued warrants of arrest for two high-ranking Russian commanders for crimes against humanity and war crimes in Ukraine underscores how important it remains for us to address these matters here in the FSC.

6. This disruptive, obstructive and disrespectful behaviour undermines our capacity to have a meaningful dialogue, especially if Russia at times opposes and blocks even a basic agenda with just general statements and any other business.
7. Dear Ambassador, despite these challenges in this trimester when Cyprus assumed the Chairpersonship of the FSC, you steered us safely and surely and we commend you and your team for that.
8. We now welcome and wish all the best to the upcoming Croatian FSC Chairpersonship and know you will also approach matters in a professional, honest and equitable fashion. Croatia can count on our full support as well as Cyprus, still in its Troika role, and Denmark who will become the Troika's newest member. Lastly, we bid farewell to Canada as a Troika member.

Thank you.

The Candidate Countries NORTH MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO*, ALBANIA*, UKRAINE, the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA, BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA*, and GEORGIA, the EFTA countries LIECHTENSTEIN and NORWAY, members of the European Economic Area, as well as ANDORRA and SAN MARINO align themselves with this statement.

* North Macedonia, Montenegro, Albania, and Bosnia and Herzegovina continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.