



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
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Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the OSCE, the United Nations and other International Organizations in Vienna

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Millennium Plenary Meeting of the Forum for Security Co-operation

Statement by Switzerland

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Excellencies, dear Colleagues,

Switzerland would like to join the other delegations in celebrating the Millennium Plenary Meeting of the Forum for Security Co-operation; indeed a milestone. Congratulations to all of us! This is even more remarkable considering that it happens during the year of the 30th anniversary of our Forum, as his Excellency, the Ambassador of Belgium, has already mentioned.

We thank the Chairpersons of the FSC and the PC as well as the OSCE Secretary General for their retrospectives, their words of support for the work done so far and their proposals for the future of our Forum.

As mentioned previously, the Third CSCE Summit of Heads of State or Government held in Helsinki in 1992 established the FSC as a decision-making body to consult on arms control, disarmament and confidence- and security-building, security co-operation and conflict prevention in the OSCE area.

Over the years that mandate has been expanded, but the main objective remained the same: Discussion on current security issues in the politico-military dimension with the aim of increasing military stability, transparency and predictability for all participating States, and thus creating confidence among the participating States. We are looking forward to the 30th anniversary of the FSC this fall under the Belgian Chairpersonship. We should use this moment to reflect on ways to further enhance this Forum and support the rotating chairs. In this regard, after our chairpersonship of the FSC in 2019, Switzerland circulated a paper with recommendations for incoming chairs. We would like to share it again with the delegations at the occasion of this anniversary.

The FSC, one of the two decision-making bodies of the OSCE, remains the principal formal forum for discussion on politico-military affairs in the OSCE region. Also, Switzerland's position remains unchanged – Dialogue was, is and remains key!

Thank you, Mr. Chair, and we would like to request to attach this statement to the FSC Journal of the Day.

FSC Chairperson's lessons learned and recommendations for future FSC Chairs

This assessment paper reflects initial lessons learned during Switzerland's chairmanship of the Forum for Security Co-operation (FSC) from January to April 2019 and offers recommendations that might be of use for incoming Chairpersons of the FSC.

A. Lessons learned

General remarks

- As one of the two decision making bodies of the OSCE, the FSC remains the principal formal forum for discussion on politico-military affairs in the OSCE region.
- Given the currently tense climate in our region, we cannot realistically expect immense leaps forward. What we can and should expect, however, is to work more efficiently and effectively with the tools we have at hand. Implementation of existing commitments is key.
- The weekly debate conducted in the FSC plenary on the conflict in and around Ukraine is a clear indicator that this conflict has security consequences for the whole OSCE region.
- The Informal Working Group 'Structured Dialogue' can serve as an incubator for testing ideas related to the politico-military dimension which can subsequently be fed into the FSC. Chairpersons of the Structured Dialogue have referred to this as a "cross-fertilisation of ideas".
- Annual gatherings such as the Annual Implementation Assessment Meeting (AIAM) and the Heads of Verification Centres (HoV) Meeting can feed into the work of the FSC.

Working modalities of the FSC plenary session and working groups

- The FSC should be understood as a whole, with each of its three main components serving a specific purpose.
- Security Dialogues allow regular exchanges on politico-military issues with the aim of keeping certain topics on the agenda of the FSC, such as the Vienna Document 2011 (VD 2011) and confidence- and security-building measures (CSBMs), small arms and light weapons and stockpiles of conventional ammunition (SALW/SCA), UNSCR 1325, the Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security (CoC) and UNSCR 1540. Security Dialogues are also the place where FSC Chairs can introduce new topics they consider appropriate and relevant for discussion in the FSC.
- Discussions under the General Statements agenda item should aim to create trust through transparency and provide a platform for dialogue. They allow participating States to raise issues of concern, inform about developments on matters of politico-military importance and are used to increase transparency, for example through voluntary briefings on military exercises under the notification-threshold of the VD.
- Working groups A and B should focus on the full implementation and further development of the whole spectrum of the OSCE politico-military toolbox related to CSBMs, SALW/SCA and the CoC. The core function of the working groups is the exchange of positions with the aim of finding consensus on current implementation issues, and the updating and modernising of the OSCE politico-military toolbox.

B. Recommendations for future FSC chairs

- Voluntary briefings on military exercises should be further encouraged in order to enhance transparency and thus create confidence.
- Regular exchanges with the Permanent Council (PC) in the form of Joint FSC/PCs meetings should be used to advance the overall OSCE assessment of topics at the interface of both bodies.
- Reports by the Chair of the Structured Dialogue are a useful tool to keep the FSC informed about developments in said dialogue ('cross fertilisation').
- The FSC Coordinators are an indispensable source of support and information for FSC Chairs. Together with the Secretariat they form an important backbone for the everyday work of an FSC Chairperson. The FSC Coordinators should be actively consulted and long-term vacancies of their posts avoided.
- Organising weekly Security Dialogues requires substantial human and financial resources. Security Dialogues could therefore be held every second week instead of every week.
- Circulating a concept note and key questions on the topic of the Security Dialogues proved to be useful to establish a conceptual framework both for the panel speakers and the participating States.

