



Chairmanship: Latvia

681st PLENARY MEETING OF THE FORUM

1. Date: Wednesday, 2 May 2012

Opened: 10.05 a.m.

Closed: 10.25 a.m.

2. Chairperson: Ambassador G. Apals

Prior to taking up the agenda, the Chairperson, on behalf of the Forum for Security Co-operation, offered condolences to Ukraine in connection with the tragic blasts in Dnipropetrovsk, Ukraine, on 27 April 2012.

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

Agenda item 1: GENERAL STATEMENTS

The United Kingdom's implementation of commitments with regard to the Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security: United Kingdom (Annex),
Chairperson

Agenda item 2: SECURITY DIALOGUE

None

Agenda item 3: ANY OTHER BUSINESS

(a) *Distribution of the annotated agenda of the OSCE Meeting to Review the OSCE Plan of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons, to be held on 22 and 23 May 2012 (FSC.GAL/59/12 OSCE+):* Chairperson

(b) *Briefing by the Senior Communications Network Officer on the 57th meeting of the OSCE Communications Group, held on 26 April 2012:* Representative of the Conflict Prevention Centre

- (c) *Briefing on the project related to the destruction of expired and obsolete ammunition in Cyprus: FSC Co-ordinator for Projects on Small Arms and Light Weapons and Stockpiles of Conventional Ammunition (Hungary)*
- (d) *Participation by the military advisers of the delegations of OSCE participating States in the Vienna Marathon charity event held on 15 April 2012: France*
- (e) *Matters of protocol: Norway, Chairperson, Romania*

4. Next meeting:

Wednesday, 9 May 2012, at 3 p.m., in the Neuer Saal



**Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
Forum for Security Co-operation**

FSC.JOUR/687

2 May 2012

Annex

Original: ENGLISH

681st Plenary Meeting

FSC Journal No. 687, Agenda item 1

STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF THE UNITED KINGDOM

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

In Ministerial Council Decision No. 7/11, taken at Vilnius last December the FSC was tasked, *inter alia*, with examining the application of the Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security in its first annual review on implementation. With this in mind the United Kingdom wishes to bring to the attention of participating States an example of how its Government has chosen further to integrate armed forces personnel with civil society and safeguard their rights and freedoms – underpinned by legal instruments that reflect the commitments within the Code of Conduct.

In May 2011 the United Kingdom published a formal covenant between the armed forces, the Government and the nation. Designed to recognize the unique commitment and position of service men and women, the Covenant seeks to remove disadvantage and allows special provisions in some circumstances, such as for the injured and bereaved. Co-ordinating across public, commercial and charitable sectors, it mobilizes policy-makers to improve the support available to service personnel, veterans and their families. Examples of the provisions include extra funding for schools attended by service children, improved allowances and tax relief for service personnel serving on eligible operations, the establishment of Community Covenant supported by a GBP 30 million grant scheme, and help for those transitioning from service to civilian life, such as accessing higher and further education.

Mr. Chairperson,

The Armed Forces Covenant is a process, not an event, and its full delivery will clearly take time and resources, which given current economic conditions, is a challenge. But in recognition of the priority afforded to it, the Armed Forces Act 2011 placed a legal obligation on the Secretary of State for Defence to report to Parliament each year on progress made under the Covenant. An interim report was published on 20 December 2011. At the same time, the Prime Minister announced the establishment of a cross-government ministerial committee designed to keep the interests of service personnel, veterans and their families at the heart of the nation. The Prime Minister himself chaired the inaugural committee meeting in February 2012.

The United Kingdom is aware that many participating States have special programmes designed to cater for the particular needs of their armed forces. We offer our recent experiences of developing the Armed Forces Covenant and delivering on its commitments to other participating States, where this is of interest. The United Kingdom is also keen to learn from others' experience and looks forward to the discussion that the FSC will have on related issues on 11 July 2012.

Mr. Chairperson,

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