



United States Mission to the OSCE

Forum for Security Cooperation: Closing Statement

As delivered by Chargé d'Affaires Katherine Brucker
Vienna, July 26, 2023

I want to commend you and the entire Bulgarian delegation for your outstanding work navigating this Forum through a turbulent period. As Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine enters its 75th week, Bulgaria's prescient choices for Security Dialogue topics have proven to be immediately relevant:

We began this trimester with a dialogue on the importance of Black Sea Security, only to see just last week Russia unilaterally withdraw from the Black Sea Grain Initiative and again weaponize food to hold the world's most vulnerable nations hostage to its imperialist ambitions in Ukraine.

We discussed humanitarian demining while Russia littered Ukraine's countryside with explosive remnants of war, which will pose a threat to civilians long after the guns fall silent.

Our security dialogue on the Code of Conduct focused on accountability for private military and security companies, a timely topic given the Wagner Group's violence inside Russia, and condemned Russia's widespread dangerous use of guided and unguided munitions against Ukrainian civilian and critical infrastructure.

Our Women, Peace, and Security agenda highlighted Russia's continued use of sexual violence as a weapon of war and recognized the bravery of Ukraine's women who have answered the call of duty to defend their homeland.

Lastly, our FSC-PC meeting on Environment and Security followed only weeks after the devastating destruction of the Kakhovka Dam – an environmental catastrophe that never would have happened if Russia had not waged its war of choice against Ukraine.

We also faced Russia's dismantling of the European Security Architecture through its decision to withdraw from the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe and Russia's unprecedented blocking of consensus on the decision to hold the Annual Security Review Conference. Together we rejected Russia's use of prisoners of war as pawns in its propaganda games.

Madam Chair,

Beyond the battlefield and in this Forum, Russia has relentlessly attacked you, the Chair, for bravely standing up against its bullying and for defending the ideals, principles,

and instruments upon which this organization was founded. We stood with you, and this Forum stood up and walked out when the Russian delegation disgraced itself by transgressing diplomatic norms and insulting all of the distinguished delegates in this room.

Maintaining the smooth running of this Forum in the face of Russia's disruptive behavior was a difficult assignment, but you have handled it with courage and grace, and we are grateful to have had your steady hands at the helm.

In closing, I also would like to recognize and thank both Bosnia-Herzegovina and Canada for their support for the Chair as members of the troika throughout this trimester, and we are delighted to welcome Cyprus as the troika's newest member. We look forward to your continued contributions to the FSC as a member of the troika. You have charted a clear course on which Canada can continue the important work of the FSC and the OSCE.

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