

Chairmanship: Austria**992nd PLENARY MEETING OF THE FORUM**

1. Date: Wednesday, 10 November 2021 (in the Neuer Saal and via video teleconference)

Opened: 10.05 a.m.

Closed: 11.25 a.m.

2. Chairperson: Mr. R. Lassmann

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

Agenda item 1: GENERAL STATEMENTS

(a) *Situation in and around Ukraine*: Ukraine (FSC.DEL/411/21), Slovenia-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 Andorra, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine, in alignment) (FSC.DEL/413/21), United Kingdom (FSC.DEL/410/21 OSCE+), Canada, United States of America (FSC.DEL/412/21 OSCE+), Russian Federation (Annex), Bulgaria

(b) *Briefing on the South-Eastern Europe Brigade (SEEBRIG) multinational peace force*: Greece (FSC.DEL/409/21 OSCE+), Bulgaria, Turkey

Agenda item 2: ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Meeting of the Informal Group of Friends on Small Arms and Light Weapons and Stockpiles of Conventional Ammunition, to be held via video teleconference on 18 November 2021 (FSC.GAL/118/21): Chairperson of the Informal Group of Friends on Small Arms and Light Weapons and Stockpiles of Conventional Ammunition (Latvia)

4. Next meeting:

Wednesday, 17 November 2021, at 10 a.m., in the Neuer Saal and via video teleconference



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

FSC.JOUR/998
10 November 2021
Annex

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992nd Plenary Meeting

FSC Journal No. 998, Agenda item 1(a)

**STATEMENT BY
THE DELEGATION OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION**

Mr. Chairperson,

Our position regarding the internal Ukrainian conflict remains unchanged – there needs to be full implementation of the Minsk Package of Measures of 12 February 2015 through direct dialogue between the Ukrainian Government and the authorities in Donetsk and Luhansk. The Russian Federation, in its capacity as a mediator alongside the OSCE, Germany and France, stands ready to facilitate this in every possible way.

The politico-military situation in south-eastern Ukraine remains unstable. The Ukrainian Government is concentrating large numbers of armoured vehicles, large-calibre artillery pieces and multiple-launch rocket systems in the zone where the so-called “Joint Forces Operation” is being conducted. The transfer of Tochka and Tochka-U operational-tactical missile systems has been noted, which merely confirms the Ukrainian Government’s focus on armed provocation. The Ukrainian military is brazenly launching drones and detonating munitions right next to patrols of the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine (spot report dated 6 November). That is a direct threat to the safety of the monitors, who are the “eyes” of the international community in the zone of armed confrontation.

It is symptomatic that our Western colleagues should continue to deny any link whatsoever between the exacerbation of the situation in Donbas and the aggressive actions of the Ukrainian armed forces. The criminal decisions and steps taken by the authorities in Kyiv to violate the Minsk agreements are presented by them as the “sovereign right to self-defence”. This attitude by the Western handlers of the Ukrainian Government is spurring the regime in Kyiv on to further provocations.

The inventiveness of our Ukrainian and Western colleagues when it comes to “laying the blame” for the deterioration of the situation in Donbas knows no bounds. One has only to think of the information barrage in US media about Russia allegedly massing troops at the border with Ukraine. Similar assertions have been made at the OSCE as well. However, our colleagues did not take the trouble to verify that the photographs of “tanks on the Ukrainian border” included in articles in US newspapers were in fact satellite images of an area near the town of Yelnya in the Smolensk region, which is not adjacent to Ukraine. The Secretary of the National Security and Defence Council of Ukraine, Oleksii Danilov, personally refuted

the reports of “Russian troop activities” near the Ukrainian border, describing these as “an element of special psychological and information operations”.

We can see how the objective of this mendacious anti-Russian campaign is to transfer US ships to the Black Sea on the quiet. Thus, the guided-missile destroyer USS Porter has been there since 30 October; the replenishment tanker USNS John Lenthall entered Black Sea waters on 3 November, while the command ship USS Mount Whitney did the same on 4 November. On 6 November, two B-1B strategic bombers from the US Air Force performed flights over the Black Sea at a distance of 30 kilometres from the Russian State border.

It is evident to us that these are unscheduled actions by the US forces, which are establishing a multinational army group right next to the Russian borders. Given that in addition to the US Navy, it is planned to involve tactical, patrol and strategic aircraft in the exercise, together with contingents from the Bulgarian, Georgian, Romanian, Turkish and Ukrainian armed forces, it is clear that the purpose is to study the theatre of operations in case the Ukrainian Government decides to prepare a solution by force.

I should like to emphasize that our country advocates the maintenance of peace and stability in the Black Sea region. We firmly believe that the littoral countries have everything they need to independently resolve common security issues, relying on the existing mechanisms for co-operation. The activities of extraregional forces in the Black Sea are merely introducing unnecessary politico-military tensions, and we call on them to refrain from any rash acts of provocation. The Black Sea Fleet of the Russian Federation is implementing a range of measures to monitor the activities of foreign ships.

Mr. Chairperson,

The punitive operation initiated by the authorities of Ukraine against the population of Donbas and the subsequent attempts by Western countries to justify the Ukrainian Government’s criminal actions vividly demonstrate their true attitude towards the commitments set out in the Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security, the Principles Governing Conventional Arms Transfers and the OSCE Document on Small Arms and Light Weapons. It is clearly laid down in these documents that, when conducting arms transfers, each participating State should take into account the regional and domestic situation of the recipient country in the light of existing tensions or armed conflicts.

In this regard, we noted that, on 28 October, Laura Cooper, Assistant US Secretary of Defense, recommended her country’s NATO allies to lift their restrictions on the supply of “lethal weapons” to the Ukrainian armed forces. It would be most interesting to hear a response by the US delegation as to how this squares with its exhortations to respect OSCE politico-military commitments. How does it square with the recent pronouncements by high-ranking representatives of the United States of America, including Under Secretary of State Victoria Nuland and CIA Director William Burns, about the need to implement the Minsk agreements? How do the aforementioned assertions tally with paragraph 10 of the Package of Measures, which calls for the “[w]ithdrawal of all foreign armed formations, military equipment, as well as mercenaries from the territory of Ukraine under monitoring of the OSCE”?

It is also worth recalling with what pride the representative of Ukraine at the Forum for Security Co-operation (FSC) confirmed, two weeks ago, the use of a foreign Bayraktar unmanned aerial vehicle in Donbas on 26 October. Nevertheless, according to a number of media outlets, there was no confirmation of this drone having been put to combat use: it is reportedly employed by the Ukrainian military solely for surveillance and reconnaissance purposes. It would be most interesting to hear official comments by our Ukrainian colleagues on this matter.

Mr. Chairperson,

To sum up, I must stress that the only thing that the external handlers of the current Ukrainian authorities can and should be doing is to insist on implementation of the Minsk agreements by the Ukrainian Government. We call on them to work closely with their protégés to ensure that, instead of armed provocations and the distortion of reality, these set about restoring dialogue with the residents of eastern Ukraine, as envisaged in the legal foundations of the internal Ukrainian settlement process.

One last thing. With regard to the prospects for holding a “Normandy format” summit, as mentioned here today, I should like to emphasize that, in September and October, Russia sent Ukraine, France and Germany a draft of the outcome document for such a meeting. In both cases there was no reaction. The priority for us is the substantive side of the negotiations, which should be based on Ukraine’s implementation of all previous decisions taken within the Normandy format. We cannot see these conditions in place so far.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson. I request that the text of this statement be attached to the journal of today’s FSC meeting.