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Delegation of the Russian Federation

**STATEMENT BY
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RUSSIAN FEDERATION TO THE VIENNA NEGOTIATIONS ON MILITARY
SECURITY AND ARMS CONTROL, AT THE 1040th PLENARY MEETING
OF THE OSCE FORUM FOR SECURITY CO-OPERATION**

22 March 2023

Mr. Chairperson,

Through this statement the delegation of the Russian Federation is informing you about the lack of consensus with regard to adopting the agenda for the 1040th plenary meeting of the OSCE Forum for Security Co-operation (FSC).

Our repeated appeals to the Chairmanship of Bosnia and Herzegovina notwithstanding, including written appeals, you took the decision not to invite a high-ranking official from the Secretariat of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) to participate in the discussion under the Security Dialogue agenda item on the topic of “Regional mechanisms for building trust”.

For the sake of those present I would recall that the proposal to incorporate a contribution by the CSTO into an FSC meeting on a topic related to the portfolio of that major Eurasian politico-military organization was raised by the Russian delegation back in late February.

In our contacts with the CSTO Secretariat we were guided by a letter distributed on 7 March this year by the FSC Chairmanship of Bosnia and Herzegovina (FSC.GAL/18/23), according to which the three closing meetings of the spring round of negotiations were meant to be open to speakers from the capitals of participating States. No censorship or artificial restrictions on the freedom to express one’s position were brought into play. It would otherwise have run counter to the very nature of the OSCE.

However, the attitude of the Chairmanship of Bosnia and Herzegovina changed overnight, as evidenced by the hasty amendments to its communication that were circulated on 17 March this year (FSC.GAL/18/23/Add.1).

Just before today’s meeting, the Chairmanship not only refused, under spurious pretexts, to include a prominent representative of the CSTO in the list of keynote speakers but also peremptorily prohibited him from speaking as the representative of an international organization, which would have been fully in line with paragraph IV.2(C)4 of the Rules of Procedure of the OSCE.

We categorically condemn this action, which entails discrimination against a participating State's delegation and casts a shadow over co-operation between two regional organizations.

We draw the attention of the FSC Chairmanship of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the OSCE Chairmanship of North Macedonia and the Secretary General of the Organization, Helga Maria Schmid, to the fact that, in all of the OSCE's history, this is the first egregious instance of the CSTO not being admitted to the meeting of an autonomous decision-making body.

Lamentably, the current situation is at odds with the Platform for Co-operative Security adopted at the OSCE Summit in Istanbul in 1999, which enunciates the need "to strengthen the mutually reinforcing nature of the relationship between those organizations and institutions concerned with the promotion of comprehensive security within the OSCE area".

It would not be amiss to recall the remarks made by OSCE Secretary General Helga Schmid during the Security Dialogue of 9 June 2021 to the effect that "the regular participation of CSTO officials in meetings of the ... FSC ... provide[s] excellent opportunities for communication between our organizations, as well as with other regional organizations. I encourage [the] CSTO to continue this practice. ... Looking ahead, I would like to see a continuation of our informal co-operation with the CSTO in areas of mutual interest. The OSCE is committed to an inclusive and open approach to pragmatic, results-oriented co-operation." Her Excellency Ms. Schmid reiterated these assessments during her official visit to the CSTO headquarters on 22 June 2021.

We are obliged to note that this time we have not heard or seen any confirmation of the high-level assessments of OSCE-CSTO co-operation.

That being said, the Russian Federation is conscious of just how difficult the situation of the Chairmanship of Bosnia and Herzegovina is, as it finds itself under considerable pressure from the Anglo-Saxon countries and their minions, which are desperately trying to "recalibrate" the operational mechanisms of the OSCE Forum for Security Co-operation to suit themselves. For the sake of opportunistic political aspirations, the Western countries are thereby recklessly destroying mechanisms for collective security that were developed in the last century. Indeed, their arrogant and destructive conduct has already undermined the foundations of the OSCE and of the system of arms control treaties.

In these circumstances it does not seem possible to hold a plenary meeting of the FSC on the topic of regional mechanisms for building trust. Our position of principle on this matter remains unchanged.

In closing, the Russian delegation once again expresses its profound regret at the decision you have taken and declares its intention to comprehensively examine the situation that has arisen, which will merely exacerbate the crisis at the OSCE Forum for Security Co-operation.

Thank you for your attention.