



Swedish FSC Chairmanship has illuminated and enlivened the important work of the Forum

Statement by Ambassador Andrej Benedejčič, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Slovenia, on the closing of the Swedish FSC Chairmanship, at the 903rd Meeting of the OSCE Forum for Security Co-operation, Vienna, 19 December 2018

Madam Chairperson,

There is always something special about the Chairmanship handover. In addition to the ceremony and the insignia there is the relief on the part of the outgoing Chair and the anxiety on the part of the incoming one. That is why in July, when we had our handover, I also gave you a couple of coffee cups and suggested that you use them first before either reaching for the whip or the lifebelt. Based on the results of your Chairmanship I think it is safe to say you went for the diplomatic option, even though even I was surprised by the amount of excellent Italian coffee that was available to all of us at the OSCE Ministerial Council in Milan.

As the outgoing member of the FSC Troika let me, therefore, congratulate you on the adoption of the Declaration on Small Arms and Light Weapons and Stockpiles of Conventional Ammunition. This is important because the OSCE region comprises many major producers and also because the Organization is an important player in this area, with numerous assistance projects. The Declaration also represents a fitting testimony to the attention paid to SALW and SCA in this Forum by all three Chairmanships throughout the year and to the fact that the Third UN Conference to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade in SALW in all its aspects took place this summer.

In addition to what has been said on behalf of the European Union, I would also like to commend you for the excellent program of your Chairmanship. I was impressed by your high-caliber Security Dialogues, especially by the one on Military Doctrines. I found the presentations of the Finnish, Russian and Swedish panelists, as well as the discussion that followed, both informative and thought provoking. I also cannot but mention your special event on the 18th anniversary of the adoption of the UNSCR 1325. I think I speak for all of us when I say that we were pleasantly surprised by the special video prepared by the eighteen women heads of mission on that occasion. This served as an inspiration for the members of the OSCE MenEngage Network to prepare a video of our own, which was shown at the Permanent Council a month later. As the Chair of the Network I would therefore like to thank you not only for your consistent promotion of women's rights and gender equality, but also for your inspiring leadership on this important issue.

Having said this let me also express my hope that gender mainstreaming will remain high on the agenda of the incoming Swiss FSC Chairmanship. I think it is important to keep reminding ourselves that women's rights are inextricably linked to security. I also look forward to other events planned by our Swiss friends, including on the Code of Conduct, which is one of the most important OSCE normative documents, and on the challenges presented by the phenomenon of Private Military and Security Companies, which is something that the Slovenian FSC Chairmanship already did in cooperation with the Swiss side on the occasion of this year's Annual Discussion on the Implementation of the Code.

Madam Chairperson,

Before concluding, I would also like to thank you for bringing Saint Lucy back to the OSCE. As I understand it, the songs that we heard, the dresses that we saw and the cookies that we ate last week all speak to the role of Saint Lucy as the bearer of light in darkness. I would therefore like to congratulate you and the Swedish Delegation for using your FSC Chairmanship to illuminate and enliven the important work of this Forum.

Thank you.