



United States Mission to the OSCE

U.S. Statement for the Forum for Security Cooperation: Closing Statement

As delivered by Chargé d’Affaires Katherine Brucker
July 24, 2024

Thank you, Mr. Chair, dear Mario,

During this trimester, a grave time for Euro-Atlantic Security, you masterfully managed this forum. Our delegations benefited from the rich discussion in this hall, and we thank you for your leadership to advance our dialogues on politico-military security affairs, despite Russia’s best efforts to obstruct them.

As we know all too well, during this session, the Russian Federation blocked five of this Forum’s regular meetings. Incomprehensibly, four of those, as our EU colleague noted, were meetings that only contained the two standing agenda items required by the Rules of Procedure: General Statements and Any Other Business. All participating States including the Russian Federation joined consensus on the Rules of Procedure, which require those standing agenda items.

Despite this obstructionism, you and your team facilitated creative means of continuing our dialogue. We successfully discussed a full slate of issues, including topics that Russia is intent on avoiding, like its senseless war of aggression against Ukraine. Unsurprisingly, Russia does not want to discuss the enormous number of civilians killed during its brutal, illegal war. It does not want to discuss the bombing of hospitals, including the horrific missile strike that hit Ukraine’s largest children’s hospital. Russia would rather list for us which OSCE confidence- and security-building measure reports were not submitted on time. This is the banality of evil at its worst.

Mr. Chair,

Despite Russia's baseless claims, all of your security dialogue topics were clearly within the mandate of the FSC. They have been discussed in this forum many times before without objection. We have discussed, for example, Women, Peace, and Security for years as part of the Forum's mandate without anyone questioning its clear relevance. It is outlined in several ministerial council statements, such as MC.DEC/7/11. This decision specifically tasks the Forum for Security Cooperation to quote, "Examine ways that it can assist in the implementation in the OSCE region of United Nations Security Council resolution 1325 and related resolutions on the issue of gender and security." End quote.

While Russia might see itself as some arbiter of what we can and cannot discuss in this Forum, it is not. Last week, Russia again attempted to flout the Chair's guidance regarding audio-visual presentations to spout its propaganda. In a seventeen-minute prerecorded statement, Russia's officials issued another ultimatum demanding the sovereign state of Ukraine surrender its internationally recognized territory and eliminate its ability to defend itself. The United States strongly supports the Chair's prerogative to take whatever actions are necessary to ensure the good order and smooth running of our meetings.

Mr. Chair,

Croatia has done an outstanding job chairing this forum, in extremely difficult circumstances and in the face of unrelenting pressure from just one, isolated participating State. I applaud your steadfastness and fortitude.

I would like to thank both Cyprus, dear Andreas, and Denmark, dear Christian, for their enduring support of the Chair as members of the troika. I am also pleased to welcome Spain as the troika's newest member. Finally, as much as I would like to hope otherwise, I fear this is not the end of Russia's misbehavior. The United States will stand together with Denmark as it takes the helm of FSC in September and in solidarity with Ukraine as it continues its fight for peace and freedom.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.