



Chairmanship: Canada

1063rd PLENARY MEETING OF THE FORUM

1. Date: Wednesday, 22 November 2023 (in the Neuer Saal and via video teleconference)

Opened: 10.05 a.m.
Suspended: 10.25 a.m.
Resumed: 3.05 p.m.
Closed: 3.25 p.m.

2. Chairperson: Ambassador J. Kinnear

The draft agenda (FSC.GAL/75/23) and its revision (FSC.GAL/75/23/Rev.1) were not agreed upon by the FSC.

Chairperson (Annex), Russian Federation (FSC.DEL/432/23), United States of America, United Kingdom, Poland, Spain-European Union, Bulgaria

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

None

4. Next meeting:

Wednesday, 6 December 2023, at 10 a.m., in the Neuer Saal and via video teleconference



1063rd Plenary Meeting
FSC Journal No. 1069, Point 2

STATEMENT BY THE CHAIRPERSON

I would like to address the fact that the delegation of the Russian Federation was not ready to adopt either the original or the revised version of the agenda for today's meeting of the Forum for Security Co-operation (FSC).

The revised agenda included only two standing items, namely "General statements" and "Any other business", which are the bare minimum for an FSC meeting, as laid out in paragraph IV.1(C)1 of the Rules of Procedure of the OSCE. In this Chairperson's view, refusal to proceed with such a meeting agenda – particularly when both forewarning had been given and several hours for consultation had been granted, as was indisputably the case today – can only be construed as wilful obstructionism.

When the delegation of the Russian Federation blocked the draft revised agenda for the 1057th Plenary Meeting of the Forum on 4 October 2023, they argued that they had not had sufficient time to consult with the authorities in their capital on the revised agenda, which consisted solely of standing items. On that occasion, the Chairperson explained that, in the event of any future disagreement on a meeting agenda, the FSC Chairmanship would again circulate such a revised minimum agenda, in keeping with its responsibility to ensure the good order and smooth running of meetings. In addition, the Chairperson called upon any participating State blocking such a revised agenda to be prepared to explain the rationale behind its actions.

The delegation of the Russian Federation has provided no such rationale today. Rather, it has disingenuously claimed that it is required to follow a "precedent". The Chairperson unequivocally rejects this claim. The fact that the Russian delegation decided to block a meeting under certain circumstances does not require the delegation to make the same decision in future, particularly when the circumstances cited – insufficient time to consult with the authorities in the capital – no longer apply. Indeed, no other participating State's delegation could be required to make the same decision as the Russian delegation, if there were ever an instance where a State other than the Russian Federation decided to block a Security Dialogue.

I would also like to address Russia's refusal to engage in a Security Dialogue on information integrity in the military space this morning, based on its claim that the topic in question does not fall within the FSC's mandate.

As the Chairperson has noted previously, the FSC was established under the Helsinki Document 1992, specifically through Decision V. The description of the Forum's mandate in that document includes a reference to consultations and co-operation "on matters related to security". Helsinki Decision V goes on to prescribe that participating States "will develop consultation, goal-oriented continuing dialogue and co-operation in the field of security".

In Decision No. 7/11 adopted in Vilnius in December 2011, the Ministerial Council instructed the FSC, in accordance with its mandate, to "further promote the discussion in the Security Dialogue on current security issues".

As highlighted in our concept note for today's meeting (FSC.DEL/422/23/Rev.1), the proposed Security Dialogue presented participating States with "the opportunity to consider and discuss the emerging challenges to security posed by the rapidly evolving information environment, specifically in the military domain".

Indeed, the use of new technologies in the weaponization of information has considerable implications for the scale and speed with which such information reaches multiple target audiences, and for the direct negative effects that it can have on them. The gravity of these harmful effects, along with the modern nature of wartime disinformation, requires us to reconsider how we view disinformation in the military space, and what we can or should do to address it.

I would refer anyone disputing the relevance of the topic of the proposed Security Dialogue this morning to the aforementioned concept note.

Information integrity in the military space is undoubtedly a current security issue. The side event held this morning, in lieu of this blocked Security Dialogue, reaffirmed that very clearly.

We reject the interpretation by one participating State that the FSC's mandate should be restricted to a narrow list of topics relating only to arms control. I would like to reiterate that the current political climate within the Organization, created by Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, is not conducive to constructive discussion on that narrow list of topics identified by the Russian Federation.