



PERMANENT DELEGATION OF NORWAY
TO THE OSCE

Norwegian statement on the Opening of the Cypriot FSC Chairpersonship
As delivered by Military Adviser Arne H Knapskog at the Forum for Security Cooperation
Vienna, 17 January 2024

Dear Colleagues

I will join others in welcoming ambassador Ignatiou at the helm of the Forum for Security Cooperation and congratulate Cyprus on their assumption of their chairpersonship. We would also like to thank H.E Dr. Kombos, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Cyprus for his commitment and opening statement.

We compliment your priorities for the trimester. We fully agree in keeping the Russian aggression in Ukraine and the Belarusian support, on the top of our agenda.

This will remain a Norwegian priority as long as Russia continues its aggression against the Ukrainian people, disregarding International Humanitarian Law. Sadly, during your chairpersonship we will mark two years of full-scale war in Ukraine in February. Through the Russian Federations` invasion of its sovereign neighbor the world has been reminded of the disproportionate impact war has on children, on women and on the civil society as a whole. Ukraine has the full right to self-defense, and we have the right to support them in this self-defense. We will continue to do so.

Mr. Chair,

In addition to the devastating situation in Ukraine, we must continue to address other ongoing conflicts in the OSCE area. It is with great concern that we observe negative dynamics in several conflict regions. Our organization has numerous tools that can be used to prevent, manage, and solve conflicts. Disputes can and should be addressed without the use of

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force and with full respect of international law and the Helsinki principles. The FSC is one of the fora's equipped to hold states to account for violations of their obligations.

Following the tradition of former FSC Chairpersonships and with the firm belief that the war in Ukraine also should be included in the discussions, we support your focus on areas such as Humanitarian Mine Action, International Humanitarian Law and UNSCR 1325 Women, Peace and Security.

We also look forward to the joint FSC/PC on Environment and Security. This is sadly a highly relevant topic specially in the context of the ongoing war in Ukraine and other long-lasting conflicts in the OSCE area. We support focus on this topic and find it highly relevant for the work also in the FSC.

In the current circumstances, we fully understand that we cannot find consensus on the conduct the Annual Implementation Assessment Meeting normally conducted in this trimester. We regret this and hope that we in a near future again will be able to hold this meeting.

Mr Chair,

To you and your team, we ensure our support and constructive cooperation throughout your chairpersonship period. Whether or not Russia attempts to block the work of this forum during your Chairpersonship, we stand with you as we did with previous Chairs to ensure that we, the participating States of the OSCE, are not held hostage of one or two participating States. We need a functioning FSC to address the severe threats to security we are facing.

We would also like to use this opportunity to welcome Croatia to the FSC troika. We thank Canada for a job very well-done last trimester and compliment them for their innovative topics as Security Dialogues and good leadership, despite unconstructive and unacceptable behavior by one participating state.

Let me once again reiterate our support for Ukrainians sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders, including its territorial waters. A peaceful solution must be based on Ukrainian terms: nothing about Ukraine, without Ukraine.

Being optimistic in today's situation is not easy, but we must never give up hope that people can improve, that the war must end, and that small and large countries can live together in peace.

Russia can end this war.

Thank you!