

Chairmanship: Monaco

771st PLENARY MEETING OF THE FORUM

1. Date: Wednesday, 19 November 2014

Opened: 10 a.m.

Closed: 12.40 p.m.

2. Chairperson: Ambassador C. Giordan

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

Agenda item 1: GENERAL STATEMENTS

(a) *OSCE Security Days expert round table on conventional arms control and confidence- and security-building measures in Europe, held on 10 November 2014:* Secretary General, Russian Federation, Chairperson

(b) *Situation in and around Ukraine:* Ukraine (FSC.DEL/196/14), Italy-European Union (with the candidate countries Albania, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Montenegro; the country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate country Bosnia and Herzegovina; the European Free Trade Association countries Liechtenstein and Norway, members of the European Economic Area; as well as Georgia, Moldova, San Marino and Ukraine, in alignment) (FSC.DEL/198/14), United States of America, Russian Federation (Annex 1) (FSC.DEL/203/14 OSCE+), United Kingdom, Germany, Switzerland, Canada, Greece

(c) *Situation surrounding Nagorno-Karabakh:* Azerbaijan (FSC.DEL/197/14 OSCE+), Armenia (FSC.DEL/200/14)

Agenda item 2: ANY OTHER BUSINESS

(a) *View of the Chairmanship on the context surrounding the discussions on the draft Ministerial Council decisions:* Chairperson

- (b) *Announcement of the multinational rapid reaction force Nordic Battle Group for the year 2015: Sweden (also on behalf of Estonia, Finland, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania and Norway) (Annex 2)*
- (c) *Reminder of the 2015 annual exchange of military information scheduled for the week of 15 December 2014: Representative of the Conflict Prevention Centre*
- (d) *Call for moderators and rapporteurs for the Annual Implementation Assessment Meeting, to be held on 3 and 4 March 2015: Chairperson, Mongolia*

4. Next meeting:

Wednesday, 26 November 2014, at 10 a.m., in the Neuer Saal



771st Plenary Meeting
FSC Journal No. 777, Agenda item 1(b)

**STATEMENT BY
THE DELEGATION OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION**

Mr. Chairperson,

In the light of the events in Ukraine, the questions of the predictability of military activities, confidence-building and arms control receive considerable attention from the participants in the Forum for Security Co-operation (FSC). In this connection, we hear diametrically opposed assessments regarding the effectiveness of the use of various confidence- and security-building measures in “bad weather” conditions.

In our view, the crisis in Ukraine has clearly demonstrated that, in terms of de-escalating the situation, the efficiency of inspections conducted under international agreements is not great. Furthermore, the practical results of the inspections, if they do not fit in with the “bloc strategy” or are not in keeping with the policy of certain States, are disregarded and do not receive due consideration.

We shall illustrate this using examples. **Slide 1.**

Since the start of the year, 37 inspection activities have been conducted on the territory of the Russian Federation under the Vienna Document 2011 and the Treaty on Open Skies. **Slides 2–5.**

Nineteen of these inspections were related to the events in Ukraine. **Slide 6.** Ukraine conducted two measures itself (an inspection under the Vienna Document 2011 near Belgorod and an extraordinary observation flight over the Russian-Ukrainian border). Following the inspections, the Ukrainian heads of both inspection teams announced in the presence of the press that the Russian armed forces were not conducting any unusual activities in the areas bordering Ukraine. We have video material.

However, in the report on the inspection conducted under the Vienna Document, which the Ukrainian representatives compiled upon returning home, it is stated: “Taking into consideration the current politico-military situation, Ukraine expresses its concern regarding the deployment of three Russian Federation Airborne Forces battalions inside the specified area, outside their peacetime locations, in close proximity to the State border of Ukraine”. **Slide 7.**

In reality, however, these were three battalion groups (each around a company in size) that had been redeployed to training grounds for combat training exercises, something that was in fact observed by the Ukrainian team during the inspection.

As for the results of the work of the inspection teams of other OSCE States, their overall conclusion was that the armed forces of the Russian Federation were not carrying out any unusual military activities.

Nevertheless, parties with an interest in escalating tension have continued to exacerbate the situation, deliberately distorting the state of affairs on the Russian-Ukrainian border. For example, Ukraine, using Vienna Document provisions as a pretext, unleashed a provocative campaign, making far-fetched accusations against the Russian Federation and fabricating requests on the basis of these accusations.

We have seen how the Vienna Document has become an instrument for an information war, in which “concerns” are advanced on the basis of fabricated and uncorroborated “facts”, and, in addition, topics that have nothing to do with the unusual or unplanned activities of military forces are proposed for dialogue.

Unfortunately, Ukraine’s patently far-fetched “concerns” were picked up by the representatives of other States (the United States of America and Canada), which, it might be mentioned, do not even have territory within the borders of Europe. The question arises: what threat to the security of Canada or the United States of America is posed, for example, by a few battalion-level planned exercises conducted on Russian territory, in other words many thousands of kilometres away from the American continent?

I think it is understandable why in this situation the Russian Federation did not believe it possible in practice to invoke the mechanism provided for in Chapter III of the Vienna Document. (Incidentally, the NATO countries themselves set “high standards” for the implementation of Chapter III of the Vienna Document 15 years ago when they ignored Belarus’s requests. We do not hold a grudge but we do have a good memory.)

Nevertheless, the Russian Federation was prepared to discuss the questions raised within the FSC in the presence of all the Vienna Document participating States. Furthermore, Russia responded in sufficient detail to the first requests from Ukraine, the United States of America and Canada. Subsequently, the degree of detail in our responses was fully commensurate with the degree of specificity, argumentation and credibility of the requests themselves.

Unfortunately, the same cannot be said for Ukraine’s actions. All the Russian requests regarding the military activities of Ukrainian troops in the Luhansk and Donetsk Oblasts bordering Russia, during which heavy weapons were used indiscriminately and air force and artillery strikes were carried out against peaceful towns, schools and kindergartens, including on Russian territory, were to all intents and purposes ignored.

Preferring to have a discussion on the basis of facts, in May of this year in the FSC we refuted the fabricated and unfounded accusations against us, using material obtained during inspections, including inspections carried out under the Treaty on Open Skies.

We suggested that our “main accusers” should take the same approach with regard to the complaints they were making. And what happened? There was not ever a response from them.

“Inspections” were also conducted on Ukrainian territory, for the most part with reference to Chapter III of the Vienna Document. However, in practice, in many aspects they were not in keeping with the provisions of the Vienna Document 2011 and above all did not provide answers to the key question: what military activity was taking place in Ukraine? The hypocritical disregard for what was in fact “unusual military activity” – the punitive operation in south-eastern Ukraine – coupled with an exaggerated interest in the routine exercises of the lower echelons of the Russian armed forces discredits the Vienna Document 2011 as an instrument for confidence-building between States.

As for the statements that have been heard in this room about Ukraine’s supposedly exemplary transparency, as manifested in its acceptance of inspection activities under the Vienna Document in excess of its quota, we believe that this assertion is mistaken, since the reports on the inspections of this kind were compiled solely on the basis of unsubstantiated information obtained from Ukrainian officials during briefings. These reports do not contain any objective data obtained by the inspection teams on the ground. I am not even talking about the observation by the inspectors of the real activities of the Ukrainian armed forces in the south-east. There is simply no such data.

For example, the report received in May of this year on Canada’s inspection, the purpose of which was to “dispel concerns about military activities and provide clarity related to the regional security situation” stated that: “the observation team, together with the Ukrainian representatives, moved to Odessa and on the following day (1 May 2014) met with officials of the Regional Public Administration, the Border Service and the Ministry of the Interior. All the briefings were open and transparent and all described the local situation as calm and fully under control. They reported that there had not to date been any significant political violence in the region or increase in crime rates. The diplomatic team’s observation of the pattern of life supported this position. The Border Service reported a lack of co-operation from the Russian Federation border officials”. **Slide 8.**

Well, firstly, it is not clear what Russian border guards they could have been talking about in the Odessa Oblast. There are simply none there. But more importantly it raises the question: is it possible to believe this assessment of the situation in Odessa; does it reflect the real picture of the events taking place there? After all, the very next day, on 2 May, during the “march for the unity of Ukraine” dozens of people were burned alive in Trade Union House in Odessa and many were injured.

At the same time, reports with unsubstantiated accusations against the Russian Federation abound.

What is more, as an argument that is meant, according to the inspecting party, to confirm the reliability of the unsubstantiated accusations, it is claimed that the “people providing the briefings seem open and honest”.

For example, in the same report by Canada submitted in October of this year, it is noted as follows:

“...Deputy Commander of the 92nd Independent Mechanized Brigade (Chuhuiv) described in some detail the casualties his brigade had suffered as a result of artillery fire that he indicated had been fired from the Russian side...”;

“...Commander of the 79th Independent Airmobile Brigade (Nikolaiv) ... described relentless artillery attacks on his units from the Russian side. The Acting Commander seemed open and honest...”. **Slide 9.**

And this is despite the fact that the inspection team was 300 kilometres from the place where the events described by the Ukrainian officer allegedly took place in the first case, and 600 kilometres in the second. Needless to say, no one thought to verify the reliability of these statements. As they say – no comment. Such accusations simply do not stand up to scrutiny and once again testify to the absence of real evidence for the complaints brought by the accusing party.

This was the case, for example, with the photographs attached to the Ukrainian notification (CBM/UA/14/0093/F10/O), **Slide 10**, which allegedly attest to an incursion by Russian troops into Ukrainian territory. They show something like a T-64 tank either strewn with branches or covered with riverbed mud, and the caption underneath the photograph says that, judging by the serial number, it is not listed in the inventory of the Ukrainian armed forces. In fact, the actual number of the vehicle is not stated and, as you can see for yourselves, is not shown.

Dozens of examples like this of the misuse of the provisions of the Vienna Document or their manipulation could be cited.

Let me say a few words regarding the application of the Treaty on Open Skies.

Since the start of the inspection year, 15 missions have been conducted by States Parties to the Treaty on Open Skies in border regions with Ukraine. **Slide 11.**

Virtually every week observation aircraft have monitored areas where they claim to have noted “a build-up of Russian armed forces threatening the security of a neighbouring State”.

We have not hindered the conduct of flights now or in the past. On the contrary, we have provided every assistance in their conduct, believing that objective data obtained during the flights will make it possible to draw the right conclusions about the real state of affairs in the region.

In studying the complaints made against it, the Russian Federation has never during all these months found reference to objective monitoring data.

Only the United Kingdom officially announced that as a result of the observation flight it had not observed any significant military activity from the Russian side in the areas bordering Ukraine. Other States are not making their results public.

Certain provisions of the Treaty on Open Skies (for example extraordinary observation flights) are used not to prevent conflicts and resolve crisis situations, as provided for by the Treaty, but to obtain intelligence information to which other States Parties do not have access.

For example, during the extraordinary flight by the United States over the Donetsk and Luhansk Oblasts an aerial survey of more than 7,000 square kilometres was conducted. Part of Russia's territory was also photographed at the same time. We requested the results of the United States flight in an official note. Our request was refused, however, in what is a flagrant violation by the United States of the provisions of the Treaty on Open Skies.

In our view, the following conclusions should be drawn from the experience of the recent application of the Vienna Document 2011 and the Treaty on Open Skies.

1. There is evidence of a crisis of confidence in the area of arms control and confidence- and security-building measures, which is exacerbated by the political and bloc-driven bias of States Parties to international treaties.
2. In crisis situations, the results of objective monitoring obtained during inspection activities are not used by our Western partners to reduce tension, and furthermore they misuse the Vienna Document. In this regard, the proposals they have made about increasing the number of inspection activities cannot help to reduce tension in the region.

The question arises: how can we ensure that this mechanism functions effectively in crisis situations? In our view, there is no need for additional inspections. It is merely necessary to ensure that the following simple requirements are met.

First, international instruments should be used for the purpose of the objective evaluation of a situation and the removal of reciprocal concerns of the parties and not for supporting one party and exerting pressure on another.

Second, when conducting the relevant verification measures, there should be no attempt to go beyond the objectives and procedures of the aforementioned documents or the limits of the inspection area.

Third, the receiving party bears unconditional responsibility for safeguarding the security of the inspectors. If necessary, it should, possibly with the OSCE Mission's assistance, establish contact with all the forces that are really in control of the situation in the inspection area.

Fourth, only confirmed objective results of inspection activities should be used, and information not verified by the inspectors should be excluded. In other words, an inspection report should contain facts actually observed during the event and not rumours, still less speculation, that have nothing to do with the inspection results. Moreover, the results of the work of inspection teams in crisis situations should be documented in a report before they leave the country under inspection.

Fifth, the results of the inspections and observation flights should be analysed objectively, including in the FSC and the Open Skies Consultative Commission, and should provide the basis for political statements by participating States and representatives of organizations to which they belong. At the same time, in crisis situations particular care should be taken when bringing the results of the inspection teams' activities to the attention of the media, in view of the need for objective public information and to avoid stirring up mistrust and propagandistic hysteria.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson. I request that this statement be attached to the journal of the day.



**Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
Forum for Security Co-operation**

FSC.JOUR/777
19 November 2014
Annex 2

Original: ENGLISH

771st Plenary Meeting

FSC Journal No. 777, Agenda item 2(b)

**STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF SWEDEN
(ALSO ON BEHALF OF ESTONIA, FINLAND, IRELAND, LATVIA,
LITHUANIA AND NORWAY)**

Sweden makes this statement also on behalf of Estonia, Finland, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania and Norway.

Sweden is proud to announce that the Nordic Battle Group 2015 will stand ready as a rapidly deployable military tool for the European Union between 1 January and 30 June 2015, as planned.

Composed of around 2,400 officers and soldiers, the Nordic Battle Group is a flexible tool for the EU's broad and comprehensive security commitments around the globe and will, if it is asked and sanctioned by the United Nations Security Council or the European Council and possesses a mandate under international law, be ready to carry out a variety of kinds of tasks such as conflict prevention, separation of parties by force, evacuation operations, or assistance to humanitarian operations.

Sweden is most grateful for the efforts of the States belonging to the Battle Group, which have all made substantial contributions with expertise, funds and military troops, namely, Ireland, Latvia, Finland, Norway, Lithuania and Estonia.

We look forward to the upcoming standby period and hope for continued successful co-operation with member States involved in the EU Battle Group Concept.

Mr. Chairperson, I would like this statement to be added to the journal of the day.