

CLOSING STATEMENT, FSC 16 DECEMBER

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Dear Colleagues,

Time has come for me to deliver the closing statement of the Norwegian FSC chairmanship. First, I will go through the activities we've organized this autumn, and why. Second, I will give an assessment of the Belgrade Ministerial Council from the FSC point of view. Third, all of those who have assisted us during our chairmanship will receive their well-deserved thanks. And finally, I will officially hand over the FSC chairmanship insignia to the Netherlands.

Ladies and gentlemen, colleagues,

Arms control and CSBMs are core area for the FSC and a priority of most FSC chairmanships. Ours has been no exception. We had constructive discussions on confidence and security building measures with a special emphasis on the Vienna Document. I am sure we all noted that many ministers in Belgrade underlined the importance of updating the Vienna Document to make it correspond more closely to the current security environment.

We also exchanged views on issues closely related to arms control and CSBMs, namely Small Arms and Light Weapons and Stockpiles of Conventional Ammunition, the Arms Trade Treaty, as well as non-proliferation, with a particular emphasis on UNSCR 1540.

We note in this regard the establishment of an Informal Group of Friends of Resolution 1540. We are confident that this group will contribute substantially to the work of the FSC on non-proliferation.

Ladies and gentlemen, colleagues,

Democratic control of armed forces is essential both during conflict and in times of peace, and a basic premise for any democracy. We therefore appreciated the opportunity to discuss the OSCE Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security, as the last of the security dialogue topics under our chairmanship.

We devoted one of security dialogues in October to the issue of military doctrine, as part of our preparations for the High Level Military Doctrine Seminar, which will take place here in Vienna in February next year. We are pleased that we earlier today finally were able to agree on the Agenda and Modalities of this important seminar.

Ladies and gentlemen, colleagues,

It was important for our Chairmanship to include a session on the current security situation in Europe – seen from a Nordic perspective. This also gave us an opportunity to inform you about the defense cooperation that has developed among the Nordic countries. The close military and defense cooperation between Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Sweden and Norway illustrates that such cooperation between EU and non-EU, NATO and non-NATO countries is not only possible, but also that it makes sense. We hope that other regions in the OSCE area can take inspiration from this.

Ladies and gentlemen, colleagues,

Norway attaches particular importance to gender equality, including in the armed forces. This was therefore the topic we chose for the joint FSC-PC meeting during our chairmanship. We appreciated the open and frank

discussions we had, which illustrated different approaches to this important issue. – I would like to extend a warm thank you to our Swedish colleagues for providing excellent speakers to this meeting. I must also, of course, mention the presentation at that meeting of Norway’s gender neutral – or universal – legislation on conscription.

Ladies and gentlemen, dear colleagues,

The Ministerial Council in Belgrade was the most important event during our chairmanship. As previous years, we proposed two draft decisions for Ministers to adopt, one on small arms and light weapons and stockpiles of conventional ammunition, and one on issues relevant to the FSC.

It soon became evident that it would not be possible to reach consensus on the draft decision on issues relevant to the FSC. We therefore tabled a short and factual draft Ministerial Council declaration on core FSC issues, namely conventional arms control, and confidence and security building measures. We made good progress during our negotiations, but in the end we had to conclude that delegations were too far apart on substantial paragraphs for consensus to be possible.

Bearing in mind that a decision on small arms and light weapons was adopted at the two previous Ministerial Councils, in Kyiv and in Basel, we were hopeful that we would reach consensus also in Belgrade.

In the morning of the last day of the Ministerial we believed that we were moving towards success. We were – as you all know – wrong.

Ladies and gentlemen, colleagues,

For the first time since 2012 we had no agreement on any Ministerial Council decision or declaration within the FSC area of work. This illustrates – we believe – the division and mistrust caused by the current crisis in European security and the difficult negotiating climate resulting from this, not only in the FSC, but in the whole organization.

Several participating States expressed disappointment in their closing statements in Belgrade. We did as well. I will however emphasize that despite differences among us, we have had many open and frank discussions during 2015 – discussions that we can build upon as we move into 2016.

One area of particular importance next year would be the reissue of the Vienna Document. We wish the incoming Dutch chairmanship all the best in their work on this and on other important issues. You can count on our full support.

Ladies and gentlemen, colleagues,

When we started our FSC Chairmanship in September, we knew that we would have to lead this important forum in a challenging time for the OSCE. The crisis in and around Ukraine has dominated the work of the FSC for the past two years. Our chairmanship was no exception. And it complicated, as we all know, our work on deliverables for the Belgrade Ministerial.

The failure to adopt decisions in Belgrade does however not diminish my conviction that the FSC is playing and must continue to play an important role in fostering trust and confidence among us.

Ladies and gentlemen, colleagues,

It has been a pleasure chairing the FSC. I have been supported by an able military adviser, Lt Col Arne Knapskog, and his two assistants, the fabulous Unni Mortensen and Ida Nygaard.

My first thank you goes to them.

But many more have supported and helped us during our chairmanship. A big thank you therefore goes:

- To the Chair's Co-ordinators and Chefs de file for their hard work and valuable insight
- To the FSC Support Section for sharing their expertise with us
- To the Conference Services and the Meetings Assistance Unit for their practical support and encouraging smiles during long meetings
- To the interpreters, editors and technicians
- To Montenegro and the Netherlands for their support to us in the Troika;
- and finally to you –members of the FSC and to your delegations. Thank you for your inputs to our security dialogues and to the issues we have discussed under the agenda item *general statements*. A special thank you to the delegations that assisted us in organizing the security dialogues, including by providing speakers.

And last, but not least, I would like to express a very special thanks to Mr. Mathew Geertsen, who is attending his last FSC meeting today. But he is special and we will therefore deal with him under any other business ...

Ladies and gentlemen, colleagues,

The two ladies sitting at the table behind me, Ida and Unni, have provided me with speaking notes for all the meetings – for all agenda items.

I have sometimes deviated from the notes they drafted for me, in an attempt to give the chairing a personal flavor.

For the next section of my concluding statement I have been instructed – by Ida and Unni – to keep strictly to the speaking notes. And here they come:

Dear colleagues, partners and friends,
Today my FSC chairmanship ends.

I would have loved to chair some more,
But it's time for me to leave this floor.

We have debated and discussed,
Built confidence and trust.

We spoke about issues of peace and war,
While Anton's tongue seemed never to get sore!
The Pope's representative began to snore.

And we spoke about matters of war and peace,
While the chair dreamt of summer in Greece.

Discussions continued into the night:
The lesson is to speak – not fight!

Security matters to us all,
Country medium, big or small!

With this, I thank you all for caring,
While I sat in this red chair chairing!

Thank you, Ida and Unni!

And now, Ladies and Gentlemen, colleagues, I will proceed with the handling over to the incoming chair the Netherland the insignia of the FSC Chair, namely the yurt symbolizing the spirit of cooperation under one and common OSCE roof, the lifebelt for mutual support, and finally – and this is my favorite – the whip for military discipline.

And while handling over to the Netherlands the FSC insignia, I at the same time wish Poland warmly welcome to the FSC Troika.