

STATEMENT
by Ambassador Cristian Istrate to the
General Committee on Political Affairs and Security
Hofburg, 24 February 2017

It is an honour to address again the General Committee on Political Affairs and Security, this time from my position as Chair of the Forum for Security Cooperation, and present the distinguished parliamentarians the PoW of the Romanian Chairmanship, which spans the first 4 months of 2017.

With 57 participating states, the turn to preside over FSC comes approximately every 19 years under the present arrangement and assuming that all nations are willing and able to hold this responsibility. In view of that, **RO** is aiming at a **meaningful chairmanship**, during times of **uncertainty and security challenges** within the OSCE area: the crisis in and around Ukraine, protracted conflicts in the larger Black Sea region, the deadlock affecting CFE Treaty and the failure to modernize the VD, transnational threats, such as cyber, to name only a handful.

Therefore, we have structured the PoW and respective Security Dialogues with a view to better respond to these challenges, alongside **two dimensions: geographical**, from regional issues to those covering the entire OSCE area; and **thematic**, which includes traditional, but also innovative questions.

After the preceding FSC Chairmanships of Norway, the Netherlands, Poland and Portugal have brought up during their respective tenures the security situation in the High North, the North Sea, the Baltic Sea and the Mediterranean respectively, RO intends to complete the picture by organizing **two security dialogues regarding regions of direct interest: the Balkans and the Black Sea**.

On **25 January**, we approached the „*Challenges and Expectations related to South East European Security*”, with presentations by the United Nations Office in Belgrade; RACVIAC - Centre for Security Cooperation; and Croatia as Chair of Dayton Peace Agreement Article IV Annex 1/B for 2017.

And on **15 March** the FSC will discuss the „*Multidimensional Security of the Black Sea*”, with a panel to include BSEC; the 2002 Black Sea Naval CSBM Chair (Turkey 2017); and the Black Sea Trust for Regional Cooperation of German Marshall Fund.

The main idea behind the composition of the panels was to invite **views from established regional cooperation formats**, exploring their contribution to manage security related projects or, as it is the case in the Black Sea, to renew dialogue and restore trust.

On the **broader level**, we hosted on **8 February** one Security Dialogue related to the „*Non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and the implementation of the UNSCR 1540*”, with presentations from IAEA; Spain as the former Chair of 1540 Committee; and the European External Action Service (EEAS).

Also, on **8 March** we shall try to take the debate regarding „*Gender Equality in the Military*” to the next level, with a panel including representatives of U.S. Department of Energy;

Canadian Armed Forces - Canadian Joint Operations Command; and our Romanian MoD Counsellor on Gender Issues.

Both non-proliferation and gender qualify also as **traditional topics** on the FSC agenda. To these we would add on **29 March** the question of *SALW, but in a more pragmatic way, focused on the case of Republic of Moldova*, with presentations by the CPC Director; a representative of the MFA of Republic of Moldova on the developments of Conventional Ammunition Stockpile Management Programme; and the OSCE Mission to Republic of Moldova.

By the same token, we added value by addressing, on **22 February**, the „*Politico – military activities undertaken by the OSCE Missions*”, with a panel made of CPC Director; the Head of OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina; and the Project Coordinator in Ukraine.

On the more **innovative** side of our Program of Work there is the question of "*Cyber-security in the military Dimension*", which will be discussed in a **Joint Session of FSC and PC on 22 March**. The purpose of the Joint Session is to underline **complementarity** with the achievements so far in the non-military part of the First Dimension, in particular the two sets of cyber CBMs, adopted by OSCE in 2013 and last year respectively. For the Joint Session, we aim to have contributions from US, France and EUMS CIS (Communications and Information System).

The OSCE Code of Conduct on Politico – Military aspects of Security remains a key normative instrument governing the armed forces in democratic societies. In this context, we tackled a novelty for the FSC, namely the „*Role of the Military Chaplains in the armed forces and the freedom of belief (in peacetime or at war)*”. On **15 February** we had an interesting exchange with a panel of chaplains representing more than one denomination from US, Austria and Romania, all this against the backdrop of concerns at the OSCE on intolerance and discrimination.

And, last but not least, the RO Chairmanship organized on **1 February** a *Special FSC Meeting dedicated to Vienna Document*, which could not be re-issued last year. Yet, the FSC Chair believes it is important to keep the matter under active consideration, together with AT CiO, for which a key priority will be the modernization of VD and establishment of a comprehensive and structured dialogue on conventional arms control. We looked at the VD in the larger context of conventional arms control in Europe; explored the role of CSBMs in addressing threat perceptions; and considered how to improve their effectiveness and efficiency. Also, the special FSC meeting mentioned the launching of a **structured dialogue** on the current and future challenges and risks to security in the OSCE area, pursuant to the Declaration "From Lisbon to Hamburg" adopted by December OSCE MC.

Another opportunity to discuss present and future implementation of agreed CSBMs will be the **Annual Implementation Assessment Meeting** starting 28 February (and chaired by Kazakhstan and Latvia).

In the interest of time, I would like to leave it at that, but I would be happy to elaborate more FSC matters in answering your questions and comments.