

OSCE Parliamentary Assembly  
General Committee on Political Affairs and Security  
23 February 2018

Statement by Ambassador R. Boháč

Dear Chairman,  
Distinguished Members of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly,

It is a great honour for me to address the General Committee on Political Affairs and Security in my capacity of the Chairperson of the OSCE Forum for Security Co-operation. So after Victoria let's turn attention to the military aspects of security.

Slovakia took over the FSC Chairmanship on 1st January with two major factors determining the discussion: an absence of a decision on the budget of the OSCE and situation in Eastern Ukraine. The issue of the budget of the OSCE in 2018 was eventually solved in mid-February. Unfortunately, this cannot be said about the crisis in and around Ukraine.

The crisis in Eastern Ukraine is being discussed at each and every FSC plenary meeting. Reciprocated accusations of ceasefire violations and blame for non-implementation of the Minsk Agreements are our daily business. The current lack of mutual trust is a reflection of today's geopolitical situation in the OSCE area. Truth must be said that growing bipolarisation that underpin current atmosphere is the exact opposite of what the OSCE, or previously the CSCE, was meant to be bring about.

In the light of the above, the Slovak FSC Chairmanship has aimed for a balanced and impartial agenda that can contribute to sincere and open discussions within the OSCE. We have built upon the work of the previous Chairmanships to ensure continuity of efforts and to push for much needed progress in some of the FSC files. In this regard, we commend the former Austrian OSCE Chairmanship and former Serbian FSC Chairmanship for their tireless efforts last year in the first dimension resulting in the adoption of the Ministerial Council Decision on Small Arms and Light Weapons.

We have been focusing on raising awareness on the endeavours of other organisations that work in parallel to the OSCE activities and complement the OSCE efforts. In this context, we have organised FSC Security dialogues introducing the contribution of the CTBTO to the implementation of the UN Security Council Resolution 1540 by its Executive Secretary, Dr. Zerbo, and NATO and UNDP in countering threats emanating from the illicit spread of Small Arms and Light Weapons.

One of the major events of our Chairmanship was the last week's joint meeting of the FSC and Permanent Council on Security Sector Governance and Reform. The presence and active engagement of the UN Assistant Secretary-General, together with the OSCE Secretary General, ODIHR Director, and others, demonstrated the relevance of SSG/R and the urgency to further develop the concept in the OSCE.

Ladies and Gentlemen, we also deem important to continue the FSC's support to the Structured Dialogue on the current and future challenges and risks to security in the OSCE. This is why we have included the topic of relevance of transparency and reliability of military information in our agenda. There seems to be genuine interest of many participating States in the continuation of the Structured Dialogue as a potential platform for constructive engagement. Achieving concrete results in 2018 will be key for further development of these efforts.

Being aware of the current political reality, we have also attempted to reinvigorate the dialogue on the Vienna Document, the major confidence and security building measure. We don't think agreement on any Vienna Document proposals is likely in the near future given the negative dynamics and polarized positions within the OSCE. We do think however that a dialogue at a technical level among all 57 participating States on carefully selected practical regional CSBMs can contribute to reducing tensions and lowering risks of unwanted military escalation.

Mr. Chairman,  
Honourable Members of the Parliamentary Assembly,

FSC provides a platform to discuss military aspects of security. Our discussions won't make the bread cheaper. They will however prevent us from neglecting security threats that might otherwise lead to increased occurrence of conflicts and consequent armament race. And this is what makes the bread more, much more expensive.

We all need to join our efforts to find a way for cooperation and mutual support as we do together with the Italian Chairmanship of the OSCE here in Vienna.

In this regard, allow me to express hope that we can count on you, Parliamentarians from the whole OSCE area, to make your contribution to the implementation of the OSCE commitments at the national level through your legislative and oversight functions.

Slovakia, as a Member of the OSCE Troika and upcoming Chairmanship of 2019, stands ready to support your important work and deepening of the cooperation with the OSCE.

Thank you.