



Permanent Mission of Italy
OSCE

STATEMENT

12th MEETING OF THE INFORMAL WORKING GROUP STRUCTURED DIALOGUE IN CAPITALS FORMAT

Session I: “Politico-military aspects of security”
Cluster I "Enhancing Transparency"

VIENNA, 22 MARCH 2021

Mr. Chair,

At the outset, let me thank you for convening this first 2021 IWG Structured Dialogue in capital format. I would also like to thank the Swedish OSCE Chairmanship-in-Office for the attention paid to this exercise.

While we welcome the opportunity for the Structured Dialogue to widen the scope of its discussions – and we particularly commend the follow up on last year’s debate on climate change and security –, we still believe that the politico-military aspects of security should remain at the forefront of our deliberations to pave the way for reinvigorating arms control and CSBMS in line with Hamburg mandate.

When it comes to enhancing transparency and risk reduction, let me first reaffirm the central role that the OSCE Confidence- and Security-Building measures continue to play for the security and stability in our region. This is the heritage that we must firmly defend and adapt to the emerging challenges and evolving security environment.

We appreciated the presentation made by Germany in September on “How to increase transparency during military activities”. We think that there were ideas that deserve to be further explored. More in general, we would welcome a dialogue focused on specific and concrete deliverables on Transparency, Risk Reduction and Incident Prevention. As we build upon ideas or proposals already promoted, without prejudice for new suggestions, we could aim at agreeing on temporary adoption of new measures, so that we could verify their sustainability and effectiveness and facilitate some final arrangements.

“Consensus” on one or few minor steps would show us that we are able to cooperate and that everybody could take advantage from this cooperation. If we really want to achieve this result, we should avoid pre-conditions.

As we have already stated, in the challenging and unexpected context in which we move now, it is crucial to increase the use of available digital technology with the aim of enhancing the transparency and the accessibility of our exchanges of information and confidence building measures. The mapping tool “iMARS” provides a very good example and we thank the Secretariat for the work done to set up this instrument. Furthermore, technology gives us the opportunity to adapt transparency and risk reduction measures to a new generation of weapons.

The latter is a topic that requires our full attention with a view to updating existing mechanisms - including by lowering the threshold for observation and providing for transparency on snap exercises - as swiftly as possible. In this respect, I cannot stress enough the importance of modernizing the Vienna Document, a goal enjoying a widespread support.

Mr. Chair,

I was pleasantly surprised to find a mention of the 1996 Lisbon Framework for Arms Control in the annotated agenda, as we strongly believe that all security arrangements being discussed in Vienna in different conventional arms control fora are not only strictly intertwined, but also provide us with a unique toolbox in conflict prevention and crisis management. Nevertheless, in order to re-establish a functioning link between arms control and regional stability, a shift in political will is badly needed. In this context, I would like to reaffirm our strong ongoing support to the Open Skies Treaty, to its viability and to the full implementation of its provisions.

To conclude, Mr Chair, allow me to stress that we are probably at a stage in which the best chance that we have to defend the existing framework is based not only on its fully implementation, but also on its reinforcement and modernization: the wider the gap between the measures now in place and the actual military activities, the slimmer the chances for addressing transparency and predictability challenges.

I wish to reassure once again all Delegations that Italy remains committed both to existing instruments of cooperative security and to the goal of re-launching conventional arms control regime and CSBMs, as stated in the Hamburg Declaration. We will continue to support and encourage the work of the IWG Structured Dialogue going forward, and will continue to uphold, support, and further strengthen arms control as a key element of Euro-Atlantic security.