



Permanent Mission of Italy
OSCE

AMB. STEFANO BALDI

STATEMENT

INFORMAL WORKING GROUP STRUCTURED DIALOGUE

VIENNA, 19 FEBRUARY 2021

At the outset, Ambassador Cuesta, let me congratulate with you for your re-appointment as chair of this informal working group. We are glad that continuity under your able leadership is so assured.

I also would like to commend you on your 2020 report and thoughtful recommendations therein.

Mr. Chair, Italy continues to be firmly convinced that the Structured Dialogue is a critical opportunity for maintaining alive the dialogue among all participating States in the politico-military dimension, especially in a time when the occasions for productive exchanges in this field are unfortunately becoming rare.

The frank and, sometimes, pragmatic discussion we are having in this framework represents indeed an important tool to increase trust, reduce uncertainty, prevent misperceptions and unintended escalations

Looking at the year ahead, we support your Programme of work, which represents - in our opinion - a balance and constructive agenda that takes into consideration the different views of participating States.

Mr. Chair, we must not escape our shared responsibility to join our efforts and rebuild trust in the pol-mil sphere. Let us be frank: if we are seriously engaged in assuring our common security, we should maintain - at least - a minimum level of cooperation in this dimension. There is no plan B; and today - as dialogue in many other domains has become particularly difficult – such a statement is even more relevant. Structured dialogue is an important platform to this end.

We are aware that this exercise is a long-term endeavor; however, we strongly support the idea that “standstill is not an option”. This means that our efforts must have a direction; in other words, we should do our best to refrain from going in circles, for too long. Otherwise, we are not fulfilling our mandate, which is to build “a common solid basis for a way forward” and “create an environment conducive to reinvigorating conventional arms control and CSBMs in Europe” (ref. Hamburg Declaration).

It is our opinion that, this year, combined with broader discussions, we should also focus our attention on small, specific and concrete deliverables concerning Transparency, Risk Reduction and Incident Prevention. We could develop further ideas or proposals that have been floating around for some time “in and around” the structured dialogue.

Our goal could be the common adoption on temporary basis – for one or two years for example - of one or few concrete, sustainable measures aimed at decreasing the risk linked to military activities: a sort of “pilot project”, whose effectiveness could be verified through a review to be conducted at the end of the period of adoption.

“Consensus” on one or few minor steps would be important to 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.

I thank you.