



**Address by Mr. Martin Povejšil, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic
for Security and Multilateral Affairs, Opening Session of the Czech FSC Chairmanship**

Vienna, 11 September 2019

Mr. Chairman,

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a privilege and honor for me to be here today and address you at the occasion of the opening session of the Forum for Security Co-operation under the Chairmanship of the Czech Republic.

Today's date has become symbolic since the barbarian terrorists attacks in the US 18 years ago - let us give a silent memory to the innocent victims.

The attacks changed our security paradigm and brought us into the global war on terrorism. Let us also recall the admirable international, truly global and successful effort at countering fundamentalist terrorism in its various forms, most recently the so called Islamic state.

Terrorism is but one of the grave threats we are facing with confidence that the law, justice and morality is on our side. Our common security has also been undermined on the inter-state level, the most serious challenge being the unresolved conflicts. The Czech Republic believes in sustainable peace, cooperative security and the rules-based-order can only be achieved by fully adhering to international law and the principles and commitments of the OSCE. This, from our point of view, should also be the principled way of resolving the protracted conflicts. We believe in the significant role the OSCE should play in fostering our common principles such as sovereignty, territorial integrity and inviolability of international borders or non-use of force in disputes.

The FSC holds, without any doubt, a central role in this endeavor. Having this in mind, the Czech Chairmanship of the FSC is fully convinced of the need to implement and further develop the OSCE politico-military toolbox. From our perspective, our day-to-day groundwork on the

different elements of the FSC agenda, such as the Vienna Document, the Code of Conduct, or UNSCR 1325 and 1540, is irreplaceable.

Let me briefly touch upon the topics we intend to address at the respective Security Dialogue sessions planned during our FSC Chairmanship.

Our first Security Dialogue will be focused on regional cooperation in the politico-military sphere, as we do believe it has an uncontested added value in terms of increasing transparency and building mutual confidence. We will bring again to the attention of the FSC the example of such cooperation in the format of Visegrad countries. Various concrete examples of cooperation and joint activities of the Czech Republic, Poland, Slovakia and Hungary, at both political and military level, represent a useful source of experience and lessons that could be beneficial for other OSCE participating States as well as our OSCE partners.

We will then organize a commemorative Security Dialogue devoted to two very significant documents - the OSCE Code of Conduct and the UN Security Council Resolution 1540. We deem it important to emphasize their value and undiminished relevance, as we mark this year the 25th anniversary of the Code of Conduct and the 15th anniversary of UNSCR 1540. We commend in this regard the joint effort of the OSCE Conflict Prevention Center and the Ministry of Defence of Hungary to organise in Budapest a Symposium called “From Budapest to Budapest” from 16 to 18 October 2019, to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the OSCE Code of Conduct on Politico – Military Aspects of Security. We remain committed to deliver all necessary support and work together with the organisers to contribute to the success of this important event.

Further, we intend to devote the next Security Dialogue to the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security. We very much appreciate that this issue has become a standing point on the agenda of FSC Chairmanships, and rightly so, as it deserves our continued attention.

In this regard, gender mainstreaming will be fully taken into account, and promoted during our FSC Chairmanship. We will have the opportunity, at the dedicated Security Dialogue, to hear from female and male officers, about their experience of gender-related aspects in the very demanding environment of the armed forces.

We will also pay due attention to the Vienna Document – its modernisation / revision has been overdue, not only in calendar terms but also given the reality of military forces and activities we have to cope with through the transparency and verification measures. A very impressive amount of political will and work within the FSC has already been dedicated to VD modernisation proposals. We sense a strong and growing support for progress which should materialize in upgrade of the Vienna Document 2011. Many are actively involved and support the process, some are less convinced. The FSC Chair will talk to and listen to all. We know there have been concrete proposals since before the last Ministerial and we believe more will be proposed to strengthen the existing notification and observation régime but also to widen its scope to better capture e.g. the snap exercises. Also, dedicated Security Dialogue, can help further talk through some aspects of the Vienna Document implementation which are relevant for its modernisation.

There is also the broad area of risk reduction/incident prevention where some are willing to go further in codifying the practices hitherto voluntary.

This is also where the work of the FSC is synergistic with that to the Structured Dialogue process which we fully support. The Structured Dialogue is a valuable platform for a debate on current politico-military topics directly pertinent for the FSC, risk reduction and incident prevention most notably. That is why we maintain a close touch with In the Chair of the Informal Working Group on the Structured Dialogue, Ambassador Jeroen Boender, and the Slovak Chairmanship in Office. Together, we will organize in October a joint session of the FSC and the Permanent Council dedicated to the Structured Dialogue.

Despite best efforts and bona fide consensus – building is never easy in the FSC. Let me reassure you that our ambition will be to seek consensus on the highest rather than lowest denominator, to seek progress where proposals for solutions have been ripe or even overdue and to do our best to provide for a VD modernisation package by the Bratislava ministerial. Whether it will happen is more in the hands of participating States more than of the Chairmanship.

Finally, we will also address the issue of small arms and light weapons and stockpiles of conventional ammunition. This is an area where the OSCE has a strong *acquis* and a very visible footprint in terms of normative framework and practical assistance. In this connection, the Czech FSC Chair will work with all parties in addressing the implementation of OSCE SALW/SCA assistance projects.

Our Chairmanship program menu is realistic and doable, but as always it depends on the will and support of all states. We hope it will be there in the necessary amount to allow us to score success on key deliverables. And success – like failure – is always common in cooperative security.

Let me now briefly pass the floor to Ambassador Šrámek. Ivo, please.

Thank you.