

SECOND DAY OF THE TWENTY-FIFTH MEETING OF THE MINISTERIAL COUNCIL

THIRD PLENARY SESSION (CLOSED)

1. Date: Friday, 7 December 2018

Opened: 10.05 a.m.
Suspended: 11.10 a.m.

2. Chairperson: H.E. Mr. Miroslav Lajčák, Minister of Foreign and European Affairs of Slovakia

3. Subjects discussed – Statements – Decisions/documents adopted:

Agenda item 6: STATEMENTS BY HEADS OF DELEGATIONS (continued)

Chairperson (Slovakia), Spain (MC.DEL/64/18 OSCE+), Japan (Partner for Co-operation), Morocco (Partner for Co-operation) (MC.DEL/43/18), Afghanistan (Partner for Co-operation) (MC.DEL/55/18), Republic of Korea (Partner for Co-operation), Australia (Partner for Co-operation) (MC.DEL/68/18 OSCE+), Jordan (Partner for Co-operation), Thailand (Partner for Co-operation) (MC.DEL/27/18 OSCE+), Israel (Partner for Co-operation) (MC.DEL/66/18 OSCE+), Algeria (Partner for Co-operation), Tunisia (Partner for Co-operation), Egypt (Partner for Co-operation)

4. Next meeting:

Friday, 7 December 2018, time² to be announced, in the plenary hall

1 Includes corrections to the translation of attachment 2 to Ministerial Council Decision No. 1/18 and to annex 9 of the journal.

2 The time to be announced means the time of the closing session; please see page 5 of the journal.

THIRD PLENARY SESSION (CONTINUED) (CLOSED)

1. Date: Friday, 7 December 2018

Resumed: 8.15 p.m.
Closed: 9.45 p.m.

2. Chairperson: Ambassador A. Azzoni, Permanent Representative of Italy to the OSCE

3. Subjects discussed – Statements – Decisions/documents adopted:

Agenda item 7: ADOPTION OF MINISTERIAL COUNCIL DOCUMENTS AND DECISIONS

Chairperson

The Chairperson announced that Decision No. 1/18 (MC.DEC/1/18/Corr.1) on the OSCE Chairmanship in the year 2020, the text of which is appended to this journal, had been adopted by the Ministerial Council on 5 December 2018 through a silence procedure.

Document adopted: The Ministerial Council adopted the Ministerial Statement on the Negotiations on the Transdniestrian Settlement Process in the “5+2” Format (MC.DOC/1/18), the text of which is appended to this journal.

Document adopted: The Ministerial Council adopted the Declaration on the Digital Economy as a Driver for Promoting Co-operation, Security and Growth (MC.DOC/2/18), the text of which is appended to this journal.

Document adopted: The Ministerial Council adopted the Declaration on the Role of Youth in Contributing to Peace and Security Efforts (MC.DOC/3/18), the text of which is appended to this journal.

Norway (also on behalf of Canada, Denmark, Finland, Iceland and Sweden) (interpretative statement, see attachment to the document)

Document adopted: The Ministerial Council adopted the Declaration on Security and Co-operation in the Mediterranean (MC.DOC/4/18), the text of which is appended to this journal.

Russian Federation (interpretative statement, see attachment 1 to the document), Austria-European Union (with the candidate country Montenegro in alignment) (interpretative statement, see attachment 2 to the document)

Document adopted: The Ministerial Council adopted the Declaration on OSCE Efforts in the Field of Norms and Best Practices on Small Arms and

Light Weapons and Stockpiles of Conventional Ammunition (MC.DOC/5/18), the text of which is appended to this journal.

Decision: The Ministerial Council adopted Decision No. 2/18 (MC.DEC/2/18) on the time and place of the next meeting of the OSCE Ministerial Council, the text of which is appended to this journal.

Decision: The Ministerial Council adopted Decision No. 3/18 (MC.DEC/3/18) on the safety of journalists, the text of which is appended to this journal.

Austria-European Union (with the candidate countries Albania, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Montenegro; as well as Canada and Ukraine, in alignment) (interpretative statement, see attachment 1 to the decision), United States of America (interpretative statement, see attachment 2 to the decision)

Decision: The Ministerial Council adopted Decision No. 4/18 (MC.DEC/4/18) on preventing and combating violence against women, the text of which is appended to this journal.

Canada (also on behalf of Albania, Austria-European Union, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Georgia, Iceland, Montenegro, Norway, Serbia, Switzerland, Ukraine and the United States of America) (interpretative statement, see attachment to the decision)

Decision: The Ministerial Council adopted Decision No. 5/18 (MC.DEC/5/18) on human capital development in the digital era, the text of which is appended to this journal.

Decision: The Ministerial Council adopted Decision No. 6/18 (MC.DEC/6/18) on strengthening efforts to prevent and combat child trafficking, including of unaccompanied minors, the text of which is appended to this journal.

Holy See (interpretative statement, see attachment to the decision)

Agenda item 8: CLOSING STATEMENTS BY PARTICIPATING STATES

Albania, Austria-European Union (Annex 1), Canada (also on behalf of Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Sweden, Ukraine, the United Kingdom and the United States of America) (Annex 2), United States of America (Annex 3), Poland (also on behalf of Albania, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Montenegro, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Turkey, the United Kingdom and the United States of America) (Annex 4), Ukraine (Annex 5), Russian Federation (Annex 6), Switzerland (MC.DEL/62/18 OSCE+)

Agenda item 9: ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- (a) *Security sector governance and reform*: Slovakia (also on behalf of Albania, Andorra, Armenia, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Canada, Croatia, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Denmark, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Georgia, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Malta, Moldova, Mongolia, Montenegro, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and the United States of America) (Annex 7), Chairperson
- (b) *Human rights and fundamental freedoms in the OSCE area*: Denmark (also on behalf of Albania, Andorra, Armenia, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Moldova, Monaco, Montenegro, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, San Marino, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Ukraine, the United Kingdom and the United States of America) (Annex 8)
- (c) *Seventieth anniversary of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide*: Austria-European Union (with the candidate countries the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia; the European Free Trade Association countries Iceland and Liechtenstein, members of the European Economic Area; as well as Armenia, Azerbaijan, Canada, Georgia, San Marino, Switzerland, Turkey, Ukraine and the United States of America, in alignment) (MC.DEL/67/18/Rev.1), Azerbaijan, Armenia (MC.DEL/71/18)
- (d) *Proposed amendment to the Rules of Procedure of the OSCE (MC.DOC/1/06) with regard to the order of statements at the meetings of the OSCE Ministerial Council*: Malta (also on behalf of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cyprus, Ireland, Italy, Kazakhstan, Monaco, Portugal, Romania, San Marino, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain and Switzerland) (Annex 9)
- (e) *“Quadriga” Statement on the Crisis in and around Ukraine and the Milan Quadriga Declaration on Dialogue, Ownership and Responsibility for a Safer Europe*: Chairperson (also on behalf of Albania, Austria and Slovakia) (Annex 10) (Annex 11)

The letter from the Chairperson of the Forum for Security Co-operation to the Chairperson-in-Office is annexed hereto (Annex 12).

The Chairperson formally declared the Twenty-Fifth Meeting of the Ministerial Council closed.

4. Next meeting:

5 and 6 December 2019, to be held in Bratislava, Slovakia

CLOSING SESSION (OPEN)

1. Date: Friday, 7 December 2018

Opened: 1.25 p.m.
Closed: 1.35 p.m.

2. Chairperson: H.E. Mr. Enzo Moavero Milanesi, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Co-operation of Italy, Chairperson-in-Office of the OSCE
H.E. Mr. Miroslav Lajčák, Minister of Foreign and European Affairs of Slovakia

3. Subjects discussed – Statements – Decisions/documents adopted:

Agenda item 10: FORMAL CLOSURE (STATEMENTS BY THE CURRENT AND INCOMING CHAIRPERSONS-IN-OFFICE)

Chairperson (Italy), Chairperson (Slovakia) (MC.DEL/36/18)

4. Next meeting:

Friday, 7 December 2018, time³ to be announced, in the plenary hall

3 The time to be announced means the time of the resumption of the third plenary session; please see page 2 of the journal.



Second day of the Twenty-Fifth Meeting
MC(25) Journal No. 2, Agenda item 8

**STATEMENT BY
THE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE EUROPEAN UNION**

The delegation of Austria, in its capacity as EU Presidency, passed the floor to the representative of the European Union, who delivered the following statement:

We express our deep gratitude to Minister Moavero Milanesi and to the Italian Chairmanship for the generous hospitality we have enjoyed here in Milan. Minister Moavero Milanesi, you should be proud of Ambassador Alessandro Azzoni and his excellent team for their tireless efforts throughout the year.

When expressing a view on the final outcome, we will be leaving Milan with mixed feelings. On the one hand, we are pleased that we managed to adopt texts in all three dimensions, even though we would have preferred a higher level of ambition than the one we could agree to at 57.

Still, let us be very clear: in these difficult times, when common principles that we all have committed to are violated, respect for those principles must be restored. We deplore the fact that failing to agree on a substantial political declaration, or on a declaration addressing the crisis in and around Ukraine, has become a foregone conclusion.

Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol, which we condemn and will not recognize, and the destabilization of eastern Ukraine continue to violate fundamental OSCE principles and commitments. This remains the most serious security challenge Europe is facing. We reaffirm our unwavering support for Ukrainian sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders. The European Union will support the continued international diplomatic efforts within the Normandy format and the Trilateral Contact Group. We strongly support the OSCE's role in the crisis and its efforts to facilitate the full implementation of the Minsk agreements, not least through the SMM's essential contributions. The restrictions imposed on our monitors and their assets are unacceptable. We call for the SMM's full, safe and unhindered access throughout Ukraine including Crimea and along the Ukraine-Russia State border. We also call on all sides to work effectively to fully implement the Minsk agreements and to re-establish full Ukrainian control of its internationally recognized borders. We have repeatedly condemned the recent so-called "elections" in certain parts of eastern Ukraine, and expressed our utmost concerns about the dangerous increase of tensions in the Azov Sea and Kerch Strait. We are dismayed at this use of force by Russia which, against the backdrop of

increasing militarization in the area, is unacceptable and a stark reminder of the fact that, when international law is violated, tensions and instability are bound to rise, affecting us all.

The resolution of the protracted conflicts in the Republic of Moldova, in Georgia and of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict remains a priority for the European Union. We welcome today's ministerial declaration confirming the tangible progress achieved towards a settlement of the Transnistrian conflict. We call on all to continue to work, under the Slovak Chairmanship, on the three baskets of the agreed agenda for the negotiation process – in particular a comprehensive settlement including institutional, political and security issues. We welcome the joint statement by the heads of delegations of the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chair countries together with the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of Armenia and Azerbaijan. We regret that it was not possible to adopt a statement on the conflict in Georgia.

It is deeply disappointing that we missed the opportunity to reach agreement on the draft decision on strengthening military transparency, risk reduction and incident prevention, a topic of high urgency and importance for many participating States. Our work towards achieving greater transparency and predictability must continue. We call for the modernization of the Vienna Document which also provides ample opportunities for doing so. We emphasize the need to work towards creating an environment conducive to reinvigorating conventional arms control and confidence- and security-building measures. We also value the Structured Dialogue as a meaningful State-owned and State-driven process for in-depth exchanges on the current and future challenges and risks to security in the OSCE area and we actively support it. Honest and genuine engagement by all participating States is key to this end.

We welcome the adoption of a declaration on small arms and light weapons and stockpiles of conventional ammunition, recognizing the need to further enhance OSCE norms and best practices in order to better address present and emerging challenges.

We regret the lack of consensus on two topical texts aimed at addressing transnational threats: the proposed decision on OSCE responses to the challenges related to returning and relocating foreign terrorist fighters in the context of UN Security Council resolution 2396 (2017), and the one on illicit trafficking in cultural property. Both drafts addressed important concerns to us, as well as to our Partners for Co-operation, and we should continue working on these issues.

The signals sent again from the parallel civil society conference reminded us about the urgent need to address the ongoing increasing restrictions on civil society and the crackdown on human rights and fundamental freedoms in many parts of the OSCE region. We appreciate the contribution of civil society in the implementation of our OSCE commitments, and we support their broad and unhindered participation in OSCE events.

We welcome the adoption of the decision on the safety of journalists, after the extensive efforts put in the past years, by subsequent Chairmanships, to address the issue of freedom of expression and media freedom. There is a clear link between democratic, peaceful and prosperous societies that contribute to our joint security, and free expression and independent media. The many challenges to freedom of expression and media freedom in the OSCE area need to be taken with utmost seriousness by all OSCE participating States. Furthermore, violence against women and girls remains one of the most pervasive and

persistent human rights violations across the OSCE area and we welcome the adoption of an important decision that strengthens our already existing commitments. We would have wanted a far more ambitious text, but we will work hard to ensure the most effective OSCE action in this field. Discussions on ensuring gender equality and advancing women's political participation must continue in the years to come.

We welcome that we adopted a decision on strengthening efforts to prevent and combat child trafficking, including of unaccompanied minors, considering the importance of the matter.

The European Union stresses its strong support for the OSCE autonomous institutions, the OSCE field missions and the Secretariat. We reiterate our deep appreciation for the work of the ODIHR, the Representative of Freedom of the Media and the High Commissioner on National Minorities and our unwavering support for their mandates. In these times, participating States are in dire need of their assistance and support.

We reaffirm the importance we attach to our co-operation on economic and environmental issues as an important element of the OSCE's comprehensive approach to security. We welcome the adoption of the declaration on the digital economy and the decision on human capital development. However, in the context of global efforts to foster sustainable development and combat climate change, in particular in the context of the 2030 Agenda and after the adoption of the Paris Agreement, we deeply regret that we were not able to find consensus on a text dealing with transnational organized crime which damages the environment. Negotiations on this text should resume as soon as possible.

We warmly welcome that the Declaration on Security and Co-operation in the Mediterranean was adopted. We underscore that human rights and fundamental freedoms remain at the core of the OSCE concept of comprehensive security and we regret that language on gender equality and women's empowerment did not meet consensus. The Mediterranean remains a high priority for us and we recognize that the security of the OSCE area is inextricably linked to the Mediterranean region. We appreciate both the Chairperson-in-Office's and the Slovak Chairmanship's efforts throughout the year. The OSCE Mediterranean Conference in Malaga last October confirmed the relevance of energy in the security context and the opportunities that it presents.

We again emphasize the importance of incorporating the youth perspective in our work and of strengthening the participation of young people. In this context, we welcome the adoption of the decision even if, here too, we would have wished for a more robust and comprehensive text.

We greatly appreciate Slovakia's readiness to assume the Chairmanship of the OSCE at this critical point in time. Minister Lajčák, we look forward to working with you and your able team during your Chairmanship and we wish you every success. You can count on our full support. In this vein, we would like to see timely adoption of the budget for 2019 and of a decision on scales of contributions. We warmly welcome the Ministerial Council's decision that Albania will exercise the function of the OSCE Chairmanship in 2020. Finally, we look forward to our continued fruitful co-operation with the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly.

I request that this statement be attached to the journal of today's meeting.



**Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
Ministerial Council
Milan 2018**

MC(25).JOUR/2/Corr.1
7 December 2018
Annex 2

Original: ENGLISH

Second day of the Twenty-Fifth Meeting
MC(25) Journal No. 2, Agenda item 8

**STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF CANADA
(ALSO ON BEHALF OF BULGARIA, THE CZECH REPUBLIC,
ESTONIA, LATVIA, LITHUANIA, POLAND, ROMANIA, SWEDEN,
UKRAINE, THE UNITED KINGDOM AND THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA)**

This statement is made on behalf of Bulgaria, Canada, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Sweden, Ukraine, the United Kingdom and the United States of America.

We reaffirm our unwavering support for Georgia's sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders.

We condemn that ten years since the Russian military invasion of Georgia, Russia's occupation of Georgia's Abkhazia and South Ossetia regions continues as the security and humanitarian situation on the ground in the conflict-affected areas further deteriorates.

We express our staunch support for the non-recognition policy with regard to these regions and call on all OSCE participating States to do so as well.

We call upon the Russian Federation to reverse its recognition of the so-called independence of Georgia's Abkhazia and South Ossetia regions.

We underline the need for the peaceful resolution of the conflict, based on full respect for the UN Charter, the Helsinki Final Act, and the fundamental norms and principles of international law.

We welcome the progress made by Georgia in strengthening democracy and good governance, improving transparency of its institutions, and upholding human rights, as well as in the process of European and Euro-Atlantic integration and economic development. It is disappointing that these benefits cannot be enjoyed by the residents of Georgia's Abkhazia and South Ossetia regions. We believe a peaceful resolution of the Russia-Georgia conflict would have a transformative effect not only on Georgia but on the region as a whole.

We express our deep concern over the increase of Russia's military exercises and its further military build-up in Georgia's Abkhazia and South Ossetia regions. Continuous

violations of the EU-mediated 12 August 2008 ceasefire agreement by Russia destabilize the situation and erode the principles and norms upon which our security depends.

We reiterate our firm support to the Geneva International Discussions as a unique and important negotiation format to address the security, human rights and humanitarian challenges stemming from the unresolved conflict between Georgia and Russia. We regret the lack of progress on the core issues of the discussions, including the non-use of force, establishment of international security arrangements in Georgia's Abkhazia and South Ossetia regions aimed at providing security and stability on the ground, and ensuring the safe, dignified, and voluntary return of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees. We underline the crucial importance of participants in good faith to find durable solutions for the security and humanitarian challenges of those affected by the conflict and to reach tangible results on core issues of the negotiations.

We express our strong support for the incident prevention and response mechanisms (IPRMs) and emphasize their important role in preventing the escalation of the conflict. We express our great concern over the latest disruptions of the IPRMs in both Gali and Ergneti and call upon the participants to resume the IPRMs without further delay in full respect of the founding principles and ground rules. We encourage the participants to find proper solutions for the safety and humanitarian needs of the conflict-affected population.

We commend the valuable contribution of the EU Monitoring Mission (EUMM) in preventing the escalation of tensions on the ground and once again call upon the Russian Federation to allow the EUMM to fully implement its mandate and enable the Mission's access to Georgia's Abkhazia and South Ossetia regions.

We condemn the killings of Georgian IDPs Archil Tatumashvili, Giga Otkhзорia, and Davit Basharuli, and urge the Russian Federation, as the State exercising effective control over Georgia's Abkhazia and South Ossetia regions, to remove any obstacles to bringing the perpetrators to justice. In this context, we support preventive steps by Georgia aimed at eradication of the sense of impunity and abuses of human rights in Georgia's Abkhazia and South Ossetia regions, and we take note of the adoption of the Decree of the Government of Georgia on approval of the Otkhзорia-Tatumashvili list based on the relevant Resolution of the Parliament of Georgia.

We are deeply concerned over the ethnic discrimination against Georgians residing in the Abkhazia and South Ossetia regions and condemn the abuses including allegations involving torture and cruel or degrading treatment or punishment, undue restrictions on rights related to freedom of movement and residence, housing, land and property, as well as the restriction of education in one's native language. We are concerned about the impact of closures of so-called crossing points.

We condemn the mass destruction of houses of IDPs, which illustrates Russia's purposeful policy aimed at completely erasing the traces of the ethnic Georgian population and cultural heritage in the Abkhazia and South Ossetia regions. We support the voluntary return of IDPs and refugees to the places of their origin.

We underline that the ongoing process of fortification of the occupation line through installation of barbed and razor wire fences and other artificial obstacles further aggravates the humanitarian conditions of the conflict-affected population on the ground.

In this context, we call upon the Russian Federation to allow the unhindered access of international human rights monitoring mechanisms to the Abkhazia and South Ossetia regions.

We support the peaceful conflict resolution policy of the Government of Georgia. We welcome Georgia's compliance with the EU-mediated 12 August 2008 ceasefire agreement and call upon the Russian Federation to respect its international obligations and fully implement the aforementioned ceasefire agreement, *inter alia*, to withdraw its military forces from the occupied territories of Georgia.

We welcome Georgia's unilateral commitment not to use force and call on the Russian Federation to reciprocate, to affirm and implement a non-use of force commitment.

We welcome the Georgian Government's efforts aimed at reconciliation and confidence-building between divided communities. We reiterate our strong support to the peace initiative of the Government of Georgia, "A Step to a Better Future," aimed at fostering confidence-building and interaction among the divided communities and improving the humanitarian and socio-economic conditions of people residing in Georgia's Abkhazia and South Ossetia regions.

We welcome the Georgian Government's policy of dialogue with the Russian Federation in order to de-escalate tensions with full respect for Georgia's sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders.

We encourage the OSCE's further active engagement in the process of peaceful resolution of the Russia-Georgia conflict and facilitation of confidence-building and engagement between the communities divided by war and occupation line.

We encourage the OSCE participating States to agree on the opening of an OSCE cross-dimensional mission in Georgia for the benefit of the conflict-affected persons including a monitoring capacity able to operate in both the Abkhazia and South Ossetia regions. The mission will considerably strengthen the OSCE's engagement in the Geneva International Discussions and IPRMs, as well as in implementation of confidence-building measures.

The Friends will redouble their efforts to keep the issues related to the Russia-Georgia conflict high on the international agenda, raise awareness of developments in Georgia's Abkhazia and South Ossetia regions, and emphasize the urgent need for peaceful resolution of the conflict.



**Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
Ministerial Council
Milan 2018**

MC(25).JOUR/2/Corr.1
7 December 2018
Annex 3

Original: ENGLISH

Second day of the Twenty-Fifth Meeting
MC(25) Journal No. 2, Agenda item 8

**STATEMENT BY
THE DELEGATION OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA**

Yesterday, US head of delegation Wess Mitchell paid tribute to the late President George H. W. Bush and his support of the OSCE. At the Paris Summit in 1990, President Bush offered timeless advice – that participating States must put OSCE principles into practice.

Twenty-eight years later, the OSCE and the principles at its core remain vital to Europe’s security architecture. When a State contravenes these principles, as Russia repeatedly does in Ukraine – most recently in the Kerch Strait and Sea of Azov – the results are horrific.

Moscow’s ongoing aggression in Crimea and eastern Ukraine precipitated and perpetuates the worst security and humanitarian crisis in Europe since the 1990s. But when Russia sent its “little green men” into Crimea and the Donbas in 2014, the OSCE responded. The United States strongly supported the launch of the largest mission the Organization has ever fielded: the Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine. The OSCE also established a conflict settlement mechanism, the Trilateral Contact Group, but Russia and its proxies consistently obstruct progress.

There will be no progress in Ukraine until Russia changes its behaviour. The onus lies squarely on Moscow, and the United States will not support agreements for the sake of agreements that sacrifice or undercut the principles President Bush and the leaders of other participating States enshrined in Paris. We value Italy’s effort in 2018 to advance and move forward in the same spirit we all displayed in 1990.

Russia’s disregard for its neighbours’ frontiers and the human rights of those within its borders is the chief cause of mistrust and insecurity in this region. Trust is built through deeds, not empty dialogue. With this in mind, Assistant Secretary Mitchell yesterday underscored our commitment to Vienna Document modernization. The concrete proposals endorsed by almost every participating State would help rebuild military transparency with the OSCE region. We regret that participating States were not able to reach consensus on even modest steps to update the Vienna Document.

We commend the Italian Chairperson-in-Office and the Swedish Chairperson of the Forum for Security Co-operation for their efforts on behalf of Vienna Document

modernization. We must redouble our efforts next year. This should include continuing our frank and open exchange of views on key security issues and threat perceptions within the Structured Dialogue on security issues.

We welcome the statement issued at this ministerial by the Minsk Group Co-Chairs and the Armenian and Azerbaijani foreign ministers. We also welcome the statement of all 57 ministers on the negotiations on the Transnistrian settlement process.

We regret that again it was not possible to reach consensus on a regional statement on the Russia-Georgia conflict. Ten years have passed since 2008, and still Russia has not fulfilled basic ceasefire commitments. In Paris nearly 30 years ago, our leaders expressed their conviction that “an essential complement to the duty of States to refrain from the threat or use of force is the peaceful settlement of disputes...”. Russia’s political and military actions in the South Ossetia and Abkhazia regions of Georgia have been directed at the opposite, deliberately intended to make division and suspicion permanent facts on the ground. The United States was pleased to join the Friends of Georgia in expressing unwavering support for Georgia’s sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders.

The United States continues to value this Organization, its comprehensive approach to security, and its principles and institutions, even as we lament that certain States refused to join consensus on a number of key decisions that would have strengthened the OSCE to meet today’s challenges.

We are proud that 16 participating States responded to credible reports of the Russian Federation’s utter failure to uphold human rights in its Republic of Chechnya by invoking the OSCE’s Moscow Mechanism. The human dimension remains critical to our shared security, and we will continue to work toward meaningful, concrete actions in this dimension in 2019.

Allow me to close by looking back four decades. A short time after the Helsinki Final Act was signed, renowned physicist and human rights defender Mr. Andrei Sakharov stated in his Nobel Peace Prize lecture: “Peace, progress, human rights – these three goals are insolubly linked to one another: it is impossible to achieve one of these goals if the other two are ignored.” The United States remains resolved to work within the OSCE to advance all of these goals for the sake of our common security.

Mr. Chairperson, we request that this statement be attached to the journal of the day.



**Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
Ministerial Council
Milan 2018**

MC(25).JOUR/2/Corr.1
7 December 2018
Annex 4

Original: ENGLISH

Second day of the Twenty-Fifth Meeting
MC(25) Journal No. 2, Agenda item 8

**STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF POLAND
(ALSO ON BEHALF OF ALBANIA, BELGIUM, BULGARIA, CANADA,
CROATIA, THE CZECH REPUBLIC, DENMARK, ESTONIA,
FRANCE, GERMANY, GREECE, HUNGARY, ICELAND, ITALY,
LATVIA, LITHUANIA, LUXEMBOURG, MONTENEGRO, THE
NETHERLANDS, NORWAY, PORTUGAL, ROMANIA, SLOVAKIA,
SLOVENIA, SPAIN, TURKEY, THE UNITED KINGDOM
AND THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA)**

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

This statement is delivered on behalf of the following participating States: Albania, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Montenegro, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Turkey, the United Kingdom, the United States of America, as well as my own country, Poland.

Mr. Chairperson,

The Euro-Atlantic security environment has become less stable and predictable as a result of Russia's illegal and illegitimate annexation of Crimea and ongoing destabilization of eastern Ukraine, now compounded by Russia's recent use of military force against Ukraine near the Sea of Azov and the Kerch Strait. We call on Russia to release the Ukrainian sailors and ships it seized, without delay. We reiterate our full support to Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders and territorial waters.

Arms control, disarmament, and non-proliferation have made and should continue to make an essential contribution to achieving our security objectives and to ensuring strategic stability and our collective security.

Enhancing military transparency and confidence in Europe is a top priority. We remain committed to conventional arms control as a key element of Euro-Atlantic security. OSCE participating States should continue to address effective risk reduction and incident prevention and increase military transparency. We consider that full implementation and modernization of the Vienna Document is one of the most important steps that OSCE participating States can take in that regard.

We welcome the declaration on small arms and light weapons and stockpiles of conventional ammunition. We regret the failure to reach consensus on the decision on strengthening military transparency and addressing risk reduction and incident prevention.

Mr. Chairperson,

Russia's ongoing selective implementation of the Vienna Document and the Treaty on Open Skies, and its long-standing non-implementation of the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe, combined with its aggressive military posture, have undermined our security. We call on Russia to return to full implementation of and compliance with the letter and spirit of all of its international obligations and commitments, which is essential to rebuild military transparency and increase predictability in the Euro-Atlantic region. We are determined to preserve, strengthen, and modernize conventional arms control in Europe, based on key principles and commitments, including respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, reciprocity, transparency, and host nation consent.

We underscore the importance of modernizing the Vienna Document. We call on Russia, which has a very substantial conventional military force, to constructively engage by joining other participating States in the ongoing discussions in the OSCE to modernize the Vienna Document, so that we can reach agreement on meaningful updates. Full implementation and modernization of the Vienna Document will help to avoid miscalculation and misunderstanding. We also underline that the OSCE remains a relevant and inclusive forum to rebuild trust and confidence through multilateral military dialogue.

We underscore the importance of maintaining and strengthening the Open Skies Treaty, as a legally binding instrument, to advance co-operative security in Europe and to contribute to increased confidence. We welcome the decision on the distribution of active quotas that will enable Open Skies flights to resume in 2019.

At the same time, we value the Structured Dialogue on the current and future challenges and risks to security in the OSCE area as an opportunity to renew a meaningful exchange of ideas among all of the stakeholders to rebuild trust. We commend the Chairperson of the Informal Working Group, Ambassador Huynen and his team, for the significant and valuable work done this year in the Structured Dialogue addressing risk reduction and threat perceptions. We actively support the continuation of the Structured Dialogue as a transparent, inclusive process owned and driven by participating States, and without a predetermined outcome. We acknowledge that this is a long-term process, which will take more time. We encourage all participating States to engage constructively in these efforts in Vienna.

Mr. Chairperson,

The participating States subscribing to this statement request its inclusion in the journal of this ministerial meeting.

Thank you.



**Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
Ministerial Council
Milan 2018**

MC(25).JOUR/2/Corr.1
7 December 2018
Annex 5

Original: ENGLISH

Second day of the Twenty-Fifth Meeting
MC(25) Journal No. 2, Agenda item 8

STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF UKRAINE

Mr. Chairperson,
Excellencies,

At this concluding session, I wish to reiterate the gratitude expressed yesterday by my Minister to the Chairperson-in-Office, Italy's Foreign Minister Enzo Moavero Milanesi and the entire Italian OSCE Chairmanship team for their tireless work throughout the year and warm hospitality extended in Milan.

This year's Ministerial Council was preceded by another unprovoked act of aggression committed two weeks ago by Russia against Ukraine near the Kerch Strait. We thank all delegations, which condemned this action by the Russian Federation and strongly urged Russia to respect applicable international law, to immediately and unconditionally release the captured Ukrainian servicemen and vessels, and to ensure free and safe passage through the Kerch Strait. It is imperative to hold Russia to account. This act of aggression expanded the scope of violations and atrocities carried out by the Russian Federation in the previous almost five years since it started its armed intervention into the territory of Ukraine. As rightly emphasized by many delegations during the Milan Ministerial Council, the ongoing Russian aggression, being the most serious breach of international law, core OSCE principles and rules-based order in Europe, continues to undermine trust, security and stability in the entire OSCE space. Russia's denial of its responsibility as a party to the conflict continues to take away the lives of people, inflict human suffering and destruction. The use of vague terms like "crisis in and around Ukraine" or "all sides" is exploited by Russia in its massive campaign of propaganda and disinformation to divert attention from its direct role in the conflict and its devastating consequences.

I wish to reiterate the position of Ukraine's Foreign Minister Pavlo Klimkin concerning the ongoing Russian aggression: "Declarations are not enough, there must be action". Such action is needed in the interests of peace and firm deterrence of the aggressor.

Mr. Chairperson,

While there are many security challenges present in the OSCE area, it is hard to search for common solutions to those challenges when one of the participating States continues illegal occupation of parts of its neighbours' sovereign territory, showing blatant contempt for such core principles of the OSCE as respect for sovereignty and territorial

integrity, inviolability of frontiers and non-use or threat of use of force. The unwillingness of the Russian Federation to move forward in resolving the conflicts it created has once again impeded, this year in Milan, the adoption of a political declaration and a declaration on the Russian-Ukrainian conflict. The debates highlighted, regrettably, the fact that Russia does not intend to put an end to this conflict by reversing its illegal occupation of Crimea and withdrawing its troops from the territory of Ukraine. This also means that the OSCE should do more and seek to be more effective and persistent in dealing with clear, gross and continuing violations of OSCE principles and commitments. We appreciate the readiness expressed by Slovakia to keep the issue of contributing to resolving this conflict, including the attempted annexation of Crimea, high on the agenda of their incoming Chairmanship and encourage the Slovak side to spare no efforts in this direction. Engagement of the OSCE executive structures under the guidance of the Chairmanship must be strengthened in order to address the growing number of security and humanitarian challenges brought by the Russian aggression, including in particular the deteriorating situation in the occupied territories of Ukraine and the militarization of the Black and Azov Seas region by Russia. Yesterday's side event on this topic organized by Ukraine and co-sponsored by 11 participating States provided details on these menacing developments.

We believe that the OSCE has the potential to do more. It should aim at bringing added value to those dimensions, where more focused OSCE activities are needed. In this vein, we supported the Chairmanship's efforts on the draft documents of this Ministerial Council and introduced a number of specific proposals enhancing our commitments with a direct link to security. We welcome the adopted documents, in particular on the safety of journalists, and stand ready for further constructive work with the incoming Chairmanship. Bearing in mind that Russia has effectively weaponized its State-owned media for spreading disinformation and propaganda, it is essential for Ukraine to defend itself from Russia's malicious intervention in the information sphere.

In conclusion, I wish to assure our Slovak colleagues of Ukraine's readiness to facilitate their activities aimed at restoring respect for the OSCE principles and commitments and addressing the ongoing gross violations.

The delegation of Ukraine kindly requests that this statement be attached to the journal of this Council's meeting.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.



**Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
Ministerial Council
Milan 2018**

MC(25).JOUR/2/Corr.1
7 December 2018
Annex 6

ENGLISH
Original: RUSSIAN

Second day of the Twenty-Fifth Meeting
MC(25) Journal No. 2, Agenda item 8

**STATEMENT BY
THE DELEGATION OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION**

Mr. Chairperson,
Esteemed colleagues,

Allow me to express our appreciation to the Italian OSCE Chairmanship, Minister Enzo Moavero Milanesi personally and his entire team for the excellent organization of the ministerial meeting.

The main outcome of the Ministerial Council meeting is that a comprehensive discussion has taken place on a wide range of issues on the OSCE agenda. This proves that, despite the fact that the state of European affairs is not at its best, the OSCE remains an important platform for peer-to-peer dialogue among the participating States.

We regret that the biased approaches of some countries made it impossible to adopt a number of important decisions, including a general political declaration and a declaration on the OSCE's efforts to facilitate a settlement of the internal Ukrainian crisis.

At the same time, thanks to the parties' willingness to compromise, it proved possible to reach agreement regarding documents on a number of other conflicts in the OSCE's area of responsibility. We welcome the ministerial statement in support of the progress in the Transdniestrian settlement, the full implementation of the agreements reached earlier by the authorities in Tiraspol and Chişinău, and the continuation of regular meetings in the "5+2" format. We note with satisfaction the joint statement by the "troika" of OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chair countries on the settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, which for the first time in five years was made together with the ministers of Armenia and Azerbaijan.

We supported the Italian Chairmanship's initiative of adopting a declaration on security and co-operation in the Mediterranean. The situation in that region, made unstable by external interference, has a negative impact on all OSCE countries and requires close attention.

Owing to the unconstructive position taken by Georgia, no statement was adopted in support of the Geneva Discussions on the Trans-Caucasus. However, no one questioned the

need for this format of direct dialogue between the Georgian Government and Abkhazia and South Ossetia.

Unfortunately, the atmosphere of mistrust and confrontation prevailing in the Euro-Atlantic region has a negative effect on the OSCE's politico-military dimension. There can be no talk of "modernizing" the Vienna Document on Confidence- and Security-Building Measures until NATO abandons its policy of "containment" towards Russia. We welcome the ministerial declaration on small arms and light weapons. We should like to draw attention to the joint statement adopted by the countries of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) on the situation surrounding the Treaty on the Elimination of Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles (INF Treaty), which has been distributed within the OSCE. The discussion on ways to rebuild trust and de-escalate tension is valuable in itself. We will continue to participate in the Structured Dialogue as long as it is not politicized. We hope that it will contribute to de-escalation and prepare the ground for work on arms control.

It is important that considerable attention was paid at the Ministerial Council meeting to various aspects of countering transnational threats. We believe it necessary to continue joint efforts to combat terrorist ideology and propaganda. We supported the Italian Chairmanship's priorities – the themes of foreign terrorist fighters and combating trafficking in cultural property. We welcome the adoption of a declaration on the role of youth in contributing to peace and security.

At the same time, more could be done in this important area for all States. Draft documents prepared by the Russian delegation on increasing the OSCE's efforts to prevent terrorism and on enhancing the role of the Organization in addressing the world drug problem were rejected on flimsy pretexts, not because of their content, but simply because they were proposed by Russia and other CSTO countries. We consider such an approach to be unacceptable.

The discussion of the economic aspects of the OSCE's work was constructive and resulted in two useful decisions – on human capital development and on the digital economy. The issue of digitalization naturally has its place on the OSCE agenda. We are in favour of maintaining its positive focus. We draw attention to the unifying potential of the topic of economic connectivity and the alignment of integration processes. We look forward to its development within the OSCE on the basis of the 1999 Platform for Co-operative Security.

The results of the Ministerial Council meeting regarding the third basket confirmed the crisis in the OSCE's human dimension, which, as we have repeatedly pointed out, requires a thorough reformatting and the removal of imbalances and double standards. Of a dozen draft decisions on human dimension issues, only three were adopted – on the safety of journalists, on combating violence against women, and on combating child trafficking. We expect the provisions of these decisions to be implemented by all participating States.

For reasons that we do not understand, certain countries once again sabotaged the fulfilment of the 2014 Basel Ministerial Council mandate on the adoption of declarations to protect Christians and Muslims. We urge the future Slovak Chairmanship to endeavour to resolve this issue next year.

The balanced draft decisions prepared by Russia on the linguistic and educational rights of national minorities and on free access of the media to information were categorically rejected. We proposed the latter together with Kazakhstan and Tajikistan. This is particularly depressing against the background of the deteriorating human rights situation, the attacks on freedom of the media and on linguistic, educational and religious rights in a number of countries, and blatant attempts to rewrite history and glorify Nazism, especially in the Baltic States and Ukraine.

We regret that it proved impossible to reach consensus on a document on migration.

I should like to draw the Chairmanship's attention to the need to adhere to the tried-and-tested and long-standing practice regarding the speaking order of Heads of Delegations according to seniority. The unfortunate misunderstanding at this Ministerial Council meeting should not set a precedent for future meetings.

In conclusion, I should like to thank our Italian colleagues for their conscientious performance of the role of "honest broker" and their vigorous efforts to find compromise solutions throughout 2018 and here at the Ministerial Council meeting.

We trust that next year Slovakia and in 2020 Albania will continue the work on drawing up a unifying agenda for the OSCE. We shall certainly support them in this endeavour.

Thank you for your attention. I request that this statement be attached to the journal of the day.



Second day of the Twenty-Fifth Meeting
MC(25) Journal No. 2, Agenda item 9(a)

**STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF SLOVAKIA
(ALSO ON BEHALF OF ALBANIA, ANDORRA, ARMENIA, AUSTRIA,
BELGIUM, BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA, CANADA, CROATIA,
CYPRUS, THE CZECH REPUBLIC, DENMARK, THE FORMER
YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA, GEORGIA, GERMANY,
IRELAND, ITALY, KAZAKHSTAN, LATVIA, LIECHTENSTEIN,
LUXEMBOURG, MALTA, MOLDOVA, MONGOLIA, MONTENEGRO,
THE NETHERLANDS, NORWAY, POLAND, ROMANIA, SERBIA,
SLOVENIA, SPAIN, SWEDEN, SWITZERLAND, THE UNITED
KINGDOM AND THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA)**

Mr. Chairperson,

Slovakia, in its capacity as Chairmanship of the Group of Friends of Security Sector Governance and Reform, would like to deliver the following statement, also on behalf of: Albania, Andorra, Armenia, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Canada, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Georgia, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Malta, Moldova, Mongolia, Montenegro, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom, United States of America.

Security sector governance and reform (SSG/R) forms an integral part of the OSCE's comprehensive approach to security based on a solid framework of principles and commitments. In today's world of complex security challenges, such as preventing and countering violent extremism that leads to terrorism, transnational organized crime and trafficking in human beings, national security sectors need to adapt to a dynamic and changing environment. The challenges the OSCE is facing today point towards a greater need for SSG/R. An inclusive, accountable and democratically controlled security sector with full respect for human rights and the rule of law can promote confidence and trust between society and State and stability in the entire OSCE region. Also, it can significantly contribute to preventing the outbreak and recurrence of conflicts, as well as building and sustaining peace. For national security sectors to be effective in today's world it is crucial to promote the active participation of women and civil society organizations, crucially contributing to a better understanding of and response to the security needs of different segments of society and provides enhanced public oversight over the performance and conduct of security actors.

We share the view that our Organization is particularly well-positioned to promote a comprehensive and inclusive SSG/R approach and to support the participating States and Partners for Co-operation in many important areas of SSG/R. We acknowledge that the OSCE is already carrying out a number of relevant cross-dimensional SSG/R activities, including enhancing capacities in good and democratic security sector governance, promoting democratic control and oversight and the rule of law, human rights in armed forces, as well as activities related to intelligence-led policing, and preventing and countering violent extremism that leads to terrorism, to name but a few. The OSCE guidelines on SSG/R that include policy and operational guidance for the OSCE staff provide a good basis for further work. We applaud the OSCE executive structures for the progress made to date in implementing them and encourage them to share experiences and good practices more frequently, particularly among field operations. At the same, we recognize the limitations of the current bottom-up activities and we strongly believe that it is now important to build common understanding and ownership of the SSG/R concept by engaging all participating States and Partners for Co-operation.

We are convinced that a more strategic and truly cross-dimensional approach to SSG/R would increase the effectiveness of our response to security threats. A more strategic approach would allow the Organization to streamline fragmented commitments and mandates and enhance co-operation at local, national, regional and international levels. In this regard, substantial co-operation with other multilateral organizations will be indispensable for our success and we encourage closer co-operation in multilateral support to SSG/R, especially with the UN, other international and regional organizations and civil society. The recent joint OSCE-UNODC subregional expert meeting in Minsk, which further explored the role of well-governed and accountable security sectors in addressing transnational threats, serves as a good example. One of the comparative advantages of the OSCE lies in its regional approach, particularly through its network of field operations, which can significantly contribute to UN-led SSG/R initiatives.

We commend the Italian OSCE Chairmanship and the Slovak FSC Chairmanship on organizing a joint FSC-PC meeting on SSG/R earlier this year. This was a key step in seeking common ground on this important topic. We further compliment previous OSCE Chairmanships, Austria, Germany, Serbia and Switzerland for their continuous efforts and leadership in increasingly including discussions on SSG/R in the meetings of different OSCE bodies across dimensions. We also commend the Italian Chairmanship for organizing a conference on enhancing the participation of women in the security sector. In addition, we welcome this year's OSCE Parliamentary Assembly Resolution on SSG/R, which calls on the OSCE executive structures and the participating States to increase their efforts towards the development of an OSCE-wide strategic SSG/R approach and hence helps create political support.

We see a unique opportunity in Slovakia's 2019 Chairmanship to engage all participating States and Partners for Co-operation in an inclusive and focused discussion to develop a common understanding of an inclusive and comprehensive SSG/R approach, which should be based on existing OSCE commitments, needs and priorities of participating States. Such an approach should be based on existing OSCE commitments and include national ownership, civilian control of the security sector, gender mainstreaming and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, which all aim at enhancing the effectiveness of the

security sector. The Group's food-for-thought paper distributed under reference PC.DEL/1178/17 serves as a good starting point.

To this end, we call upon all participating States and Partners for Co-operation to contribute to this process by actively exchanging their experiences and views on the key aspects an OSCE approach to SSG/R must contain and to provide the necessary political support. We also encourage the inclusion of a youth perspective into these discussions.

The Group of Friends will continue to serve as an open platform in order to advance discussions on SSG/R and to promote ongoing efforts in this field. We remain convinced that an OSCE-wide strategic approach to SSG/R will strengthen the Organization's capacity to effectively address challenges emanating from the increasingly complex security environment and to increase security and stability in our region and for its people, both women and men, in response to their needs.

I would like to request the Chairperson to include this statement in the journal of the day.

Thank you.



**Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
Ministerial Council
Milan 2018**

MC(25).JOUR/2/Corr.1
7 December 2018
Annex 8

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Second day of the Twenty-Fifth Meeting
MC(25) Journal No. 2, Agenda item 9(b)

**STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF DENMARK
(ALSO ON BEHALF OF ALBANIA, ANDORRA, ARMENIA, AUSTRIA,
BELGIUM, BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA, BULGARIA, CANADA,
CROATIA, CYPRUS, THE CZECH REPUBLIC, ESTONIA, FINLAND,
THE FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA, FRANCE,
GEORGIA, GERMANY, GREECE, ICELAND, IRELAND, ITALY,
LATVIA, LIECHTENSTEIN, LITHUANIA, LUXEMBOURG, MALTA,
MOLDOVA, MONACO, MONTENEGRO, THE NETHERLANDS,
NORWAY, POLAND, PORTUGAL, ROMANIA, SAN MARINO,
SERBIA, SLOVAKIA, SLOVENIA, SPAIN, SWEDEN,
SWITZERLAND, UKRAINE, THE UNITED KINGDOM
AND THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA)**

I have the honour to make this statement on behalf of the following 45 participating States: Albania, Andorra, Armenia, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Moldova, Monaco, Montenegro, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, San Marino, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Ukraine, United Kingdom, United States of America and my own country, Denmark.

We deliver this statement just a few days before we celebrate the 70th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights; a global commitment to recognize and protect the equal dignity, freedom and rights of every human being. This anniversary is a chance for us to celebrate the achievement of the Universal Declaration and to recommit ourselves to defending the rights and freedoms it enshrines wherever and whenever they are threatened.

We have made great strides in advancing human rights over the past seven decades, but regrettably, every day far too many people in the OSCE region are still denied the ability to exercise their human rights and fundamental freedoms – including freedom of expression, of peaceful assembly and association, and of religion or belief. We see the space for civil society rapidly shrinking, and that threats and violence against human rights defenders continue to increase.

There are attempts to silence free media and dissenting voices through restrictive legislation, intimidation, or even violent acts and murder for which those responsible far too often go unpunished. Women and girls continue to face discrimination and violence, while hate crimes are on the rise throughout the region. In this context, we strongly welcome that participating States were able to reach consensus on two Ministerial Council decisions on the safety of journalists and combatting violence against women respectively, which address some of these challenges.

We will continue to speak out when human rights and fundamental freedoms are violated or abused. Whether it is human rights defenders facing reprisals for their selfless work, or persons being targeted for who they are, whom they love or what they believe or say. We will challenge stereotypes and prejudice, combat myths with facts, and speak out against discrimination and intolerance whenever and against whomever they occur.

We are committed to a world where human rights and fundamental freedoms are protected for all, and to hold ourselves and each other to account.

We pay tribute to all the individuals and civil society organizations who work tirelessly to defend our human rights commitments and to hold governments accountable for their actions. They deserve our recognition, support, protection and deepest respect. We welcome the report and recommendations presented by the participants of the OSCE Parallel Civil Society Conference 2018, and reaffirm the importance of continued co-operation with and participation of civil society organizations in OSCE activities.

We commend the work of the OSCE autonomous institutions, the ODIHR, the High Commissioner on National Minorities and the Representative on Freedom of the Media, for their efforts to promote human rights, as essential contributors to comprehensive security. Their work, mandates and institutional independence are essential to the protection and advancement of fundamental freedoms and human rights.

We will continue to fight to ensure that the rights and freedoms enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights are enjoyed throughout the OSCE region, and that the implementation of OSCE principles and commitments is at the forefront of our work in this Organization.

In closing, we also would like to express our sincere appreciation and thanks to the Italian Chairmanship for its tireless efforts to strengthen the human dimension throughout the year.

I would be grateful if you could attach this statement to the journal of today's meeting.

Thank you.

Second day of the Twenty-Fifth Meeting
MC(25) Journal No. 2, Agenda item 9(d)

**STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF MALTA
(ALSO ON BEHALF OF ALBANIA, BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA,
CYPRUS, IRELAND, ITALY, KAZAKHSTAN, MONACO, PORTUGAL,
ROMANIA, SAN MARINO, SLOVAKIA, SLOVENIA, SPAIN AND
SWITZERLAND)**

This statement is delivered also on behalf of the following participating States:
Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cyprus, Ireland, Italy, Kazakhstan, Monaco, Portugal,
Romania, San Marino, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain and Switzerland.

At the 2013 Ministerial Council in Kyiv we all recognized the evolving nature of transnational threats in the OSCE region and beyond, as well as the need to provide collective responses, including by strengthening the co-operation with our OSCE Mediterranean and Asian Partners for Co-operation. Since then, further transnational challenges have emerged, underscoring once again the interdependence between the security of the OSCE area and that of our Partners for Co-operation.

We believe that, in order to frame a common response to such challenges, we need to deepen the political dialogue between OSCE participating States and Partners for Co-operation in all possible venues, starting from the Ministerial Council, in line with the spirit of the Ministerial Declaration on the OSCE Partners for Co-operation adopted in Madrid in 2007 (MC.DOC/1/07) and the Basel Ministerial Council Declarations on Co-operation with the Asian and Mediterranean Partners (MC.DOC/9/14 and MC.DOC/10/14).

We therefore see merit in amending the OSCE Rules of Procedure in a way that will allow heads of delegations from Partners for Co-operation to address the Ministerial Council following the heads of delegations of equal rank from participating States, as follows:

- Ministers or heads of delegations of equal rank from the participating States;
- Ministers or heads of delegations of equal rank from the Partners for Co-operation;

1 Includes a correction to the list of aligned participating States.

- Deputy ministers or representatives of equal rank from the participating States;
- Deputy ministers or representatives of equal rank from the Partners for Co-operation;
- All other heads of delegations from the participating States;
- All other heads of delegations from the Partners for Co-operation.

We see this as a concrete signal of the political will to further engage with the Partners within the framework of the OSCE and enhance our political dialogue.

Such an amendment will also codify the current practice, introduced under the Swiss Chairmanship, of inviting participating States to address the Ministerial Council according to the rank of their head of delegation, with ministers or heads of delegations of equal rank taking precedence over other representatives.

We encourage other participating States to further consider such a proposal, with a view to reaching the necessary consensus for its adoption in the future.

The participating States subscribing to this statement request that it be attached to the journal of this ministerial meeting.

Thank you.



**Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
Ministerial Council
Milan 2018**

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Annex 10

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Second day of the Twenty-Fifth Meeting
MC(25) Journal No. 2, Agenda item 9(e)

**STATEMENT BY THE CHAIRPERSON
(ALSO ON BEHALF OF ALBANIA, AUSTRIA AND SLOVAKIA)**

We, the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of Italy, Slovakia, Austria and Albania, recalling the commonly agreed principles and commitments of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, remain deeply concerned about the crisis in and around Ukraine, its impact on stability and co-operation in Europe, and the continued suffering of the conflict-affected population.

We would have preferred to reach consensus on a joint declaration on the OSCE's response to the crisis in and around Ukraine. The increased tensions between Ukraine and the Russian Federation and the continued existing disagreements on key issues, in particular over a reference to the internationally recognized borders of Ukraine and the status of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol, have made it impossible. At the same time, we welcome that during the negotiation process, the voices of nearly all participating States clearly reaffirmed that full respect for the independence, territorial integrity, unity and sovereignty of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders, is the basis for stability and security in the region.

We express our concerns over the reported developments in the area of the Azov Sea, the Kerch Strait and the wider area. As most of participating States did, we call on all parties to contribute by political and diplomatic means to de-escalate the situation and ease tensions to avoid further destabilization in the region. Relevant provisions of international law should be the basis for returning to the unhindered access to and from the Azov Sea through the Kerch Strait. We called on the Russian Federation to return the vessels and their crew unconditionally and without delay.

We reaffirm the importance of achieving a full and comprehensive implementation of the Minsk agreements as the only way to achieve sustainable peace. In this regard, we take note of the goodwill steps undertaken recently, while at the same time we condemn those initiatives that run counter to their letter and spirit. We call on all sides to work effectively and in good faith to respect all their commitments, including adhering to a full and comprehensive ceasefire, withdrawing all heavy weapons, and accelerating the disengagement process.

As expressed by all participating States, we remain extremely concerned about the appalling humanitarian impact of the conflict, which has caused the loss of more than ten

thousand lives. We underline the urgent need to protect civilians and to reduce the suffering of the conflict-affected population, including an unprecedented number of people that left their homes as internally displaced persons (IDPs) or refugees, by addressing the wide range of pressing humanitarian issues.

We condemn the ceasefire violations, including those in the vicinity of critical civilian infrastructures, that have left many inhabitants on both sides of the line of contact with intermittent access, or entirely without access, to adequate water, sanitation, gas or electricity. We call on the sides to establish safety zones around such infrastructures and to continue to enable local ceasefires that allow them to be repaired, using the valuable facilitation of the Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine (SMM) as needed. We call for urgent steps to facilitate safe civilian movement across the line of contact, including much needed improvements to the security and accessibility of the existing crossing points and the opening of new ones. We denounce the indiscriminate use of mines and other explosive devices, which pose a constant life-threatening risk to the population and to SMM staff. We underline the urgent need to proceed with humanitarian demining, especially in populated areas and entry/exit crossing points, to refrain from laying additional mines, to increase mine awareness and to fulfil all commitments on mine action, as foreseen in the Minsk agreements and the relevant decisions of the Trilateral Contact Group.

The OSCE will continue to work towards a peaceful solution to the crisis, fully committed to upholding the United Nations Charter, the Helsinki Final Act, and all other OSCE principles and commitments to which all OSCE participating States have agreed. We support the diplomatic efforts in the Normandy format, and welcome close co-operation between the Chairmanship, the Trilateral Contact Group (TCG), the SMM, and the members of the Normandy Group.

Like all participating States, we recognize the principal role of the TCG and its working groups in facilitating the implementation of the Minsk agreements by maintaining a constant dialogue between the sides. We reiterate our full support for the Special Representatives of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office in Ukraine and the TCG, and for the co-ordinators of the working groups. We appreciate the good offices provided by Belarus in hosting the meetings.

We welcome that all participating States have expressed their continued support for the SMM and for its monitors, who are operating in a very challenging environment. All recognize the Mission's constant and valuable efforts to contribute to the full implementation of the Minsk agreements. We commend the SMM's endeavours to implement its mandate to defuse tensions on the ground, promote the normalization of the situation, and foster peace, stability and security.

We strongly reaffirm that the SMM must have safe, secure and unrestricted access for its personnel and assets in the entire area of its operations throughout Ukraine, including in the proximity of the internationally recognized borders. We call on the sides to ensure respect for these principles in practice, and we condemn any threat to, harassment of, or obstruction of SMM monitors, or the targeting of SMM assets, including its unmanned aerial vehicles.

We stress that there can be no justification for any form of interference in the Mission's work and emphasize the need to ensure that incidents against SMM personnel or its assets are prevented and that remedial action is taken immediately.

We call for enhancing transparency at the Ukrainian-Russian State border through monitoring activities, until the reinstatement of full control by the Government of Ukraine throughout the conflict area. We acknowledge the role played by the OSCE Observer Mission at the Russian checkpoints Gukovo and Donetsk.

We thank the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly and the relevant OSCE executive structures, including the High Commissioner on National Minorities, the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights and the Representative on Freedom of the Media, for their contributions to addressing the crisis and encourage them to continue their results-oriented work.

We underscore the OSCE's work in addressing the crisis in and around Ukraine as a positive example of adding value in the region, demonstrating the Organization's contribution to the maintenance of international peace and security in accordance with Chapter VIII of the United Nations Charter.



**Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
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Annex 11

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**STATEMENT BY THE CHAIRPERSON
(ALSO ON BEHALF OF ALBANIA, AUSTRIA AND SLOVAKIA)**

On the occasion of the OSCE Ministerial Council in Milan, we, the Foreign Ministers of Austria, Italy, Slovakia and Albania, representing the previous, current and incoming Chairmanships of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), express the urgent need to rebuild trust, confidence and co-operation, in order to enhance our common security at a time of instability in an increasingly interdependent world scarred by conflicts in Europe.

We continue to witness the existence of mistrust and divergent security perceptions, and conflicts both caused by, and resulting in, flagrant violations of OSCE norms and principles. We underline the urgent need to find peaceful and sustainable solutions to the existing conflicts in the OSCE area.

We remain deeply concerned about the crisis in and around Ukraine, its wider impact on security and co-operation in Europe, and about the continued suffering of the conflict-affected population. We call on all parties to contribute by political and diplomatic means to de-escalate and ease tensions to avoid further risks of destabilization in the region. Using political and diplomatic means is the only possible way forward. We reiterate our strong support for the existing formats, and particularly for the Normandy format and the Trilateral Contact Group, and for the OSCE missions deployed on the ground, which are essential in contributing towards the full implementation of the Minsk agreements. In particular, we express our unconditioned support for the Special Monitoring Mission (SMM) to Ukraine, reaffirming that the SMM must have safe, secure and unrestricted access for its personnel and assets throughout Ukraine.

We stress the role of the OSCE as a vital instrument for preventing and resolving persisting conflicts. In particular, the OSCE continues to address the conflict in Georgia, to facilitate the Transdniestrian settlement process and contributes to facilitating negotiations and reducing tensions concerning the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. We welcome corresponding talks that took place during the Ministerial Council and in particular take positive note of the Joint Statement of Azerbaijan and Armenia and the Minsk Group Co-Chair Countries. We commend the continued progress on the Transdniestrian settlement process, and are encouraged by today's OSCE Ministerial Statement. We confirm our support to the Geneva International Discussions, which have proven to be unique and indispensable

after a decade of existence, and call upon the participants to resume the incident prevention and response mechanisms without further delay.

To enhance stability, we need a strong and responsible multilateralism. We reaffirm the validity of all OSCE norms, principles and commitments, starting from the Helsinki Final Act, and we recommit ourselves to them. We are accountable to our citizens and to each other for the full implementation of these commitments in good faith. This is our shared responsibility.

We reaffirm the vision of a free, democratic, common and indivisible Euro Atlantic and Eurasian security community, rooted in agreed principles, shared commitments and common goals, as agreed in the last OSCE Summit in Astana in 2010. The OSCE was established to manage and stabilize relations between States, and to promote dialogue, also in difficult times. By working through the OSCE, operating on the basis of consensus and the sovereign equality of States, we can reduce risks and increase predictability and transparency, both in political and in military relations.

We recall that security in Europe is inextricably linked to security in the Mediterranean area, as enshrined in the Helsinki Final Act and we welcome today's OSCE Ministerial Declaration on Security and Co-operation in the Mediterranean. We urge the OSCE to further strengthen ties with its Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation. Furthermore, we stress the value of effective co-operation with our Asian Partners.

Shrinking space for dialogue makes the OSCE all the more relevant. We must make full use of the existing negotiation formats and decision-making bodies, and strengthen our work in all three dimensions of comprehensive security. The Structured Dialogue on the current and future challenges and risks to security in the OSCE area is key to enhancing co-operation and rediscovering a sense of common purpose.

Working through the OSCE enables us to identify and pursue shared goals and objectives, including preventing and countering terrorism and violent extremism, and countering other transnational threats, including all forms of illicit trafficking.

Important politico-military agreements, including the Vienna Document, the Treaty on Open Skies and the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe have delivered significant security gains for many years. We reiterate the importance of conventional arms control and confidence- and security-building measures (CSBMs) for enhancing comprehensive, co-operative and indivisible security in the OSCE area.

Economic and environmental co-operation can enhance comprehensive security and contribute to improving relations and trust among participating States. We recognize that the economic and environmental dimension of the OSCE's work is one of the entry points for advancing dialogue and co-operation in the Organization, contributing to sustainable development, strengthening good governance and promoting connectivity.

We reaffirm that respect for democratic values, the rule of law, human rights and fundamental freedoms, tolerance and non-discrimination, and the rights of persons belonging to national minorities should remain the common aims of all participating States. We stress the importance of the work carried out by the OSCE Secretariat, the High Commissioner on

National Minorities, the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, and the Representative on Freedom of the Media, as well as the OSCE field operations, in accordance with their respective mandates, in assisting participating States with implementing their OSCE commitments.

We recall that the full and equal exercise by men and women of their human rights is essential to achieving a more peaceful, prosperous and democratic OSCE area. True equality between men and women is a fundamental aspect of a just and democratic society based on the rule of law, so we recommit to making this an integral part of our policies, both at the level of our States and within our Organization.

We will champion efforts to enhance the OSCE's effectiveness. We urge participating States to provide the OSCE with the necessary political support and with adequate resources, which must continue to be used efficiently.

We appreciate the work of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly in promoting security, democracy and prosperity throughout the OSCE area, and view the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly as an important platform for dialogue.

We value the OSCE's role as a regional arrangement in the sense of Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations. We will work through the OSCE to implement our international commitments in the OSCE area.

Individually and collectively, we are committed to providing leadership to the OSCE. At the same time, we urge all participating States to work together – in a spirit of shared ownership and responsibility – for a safer Europe.



**Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
Ministerial Council
Milan 2018**

MC(25).JOUR/2/Corr.1
7 December 2018
Annex 12

Original: ENGLISH

Second day of the Twenty-Fifth Meeting
MC(25) Journal No. 2, Agenda item 9

**LETTER FROM THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE
FORUM FOR SECURITY CO-OPERATION TO THE MINISTER OF
FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION OF
ITALY, CHAIRPERSON OF THE TWENTY-FIFTH MEETING OF THE
MINISTERIAL COUNCIL OF THE OSCE**

As the Chairperson of the Forum for Security Co-operation (FSC), it is a pleasure for me to inform you about the activities of the Forum in 2018.

In preparing this letter, I have consulted with the previous 2018 FSC Chairmanships of Slovakia and Slovenia. During 2018, the Chairmanships worked in close co-operation with each other to ensure continuity and efficiency in the implementation of the Forum's annual work programme.

Even though the situation in and around Ukraine remained the dominant topic of the discussions in the FSC, several initiatives put forward by participating States led to the adoption of six decisions, which were designed to support the implementation of existing commitments.

The strategic discussions during the Security Dialogues emphasized the FSC's importance as a platform for dialogue and discussions addressing security issues of common interest and concern. Specifically, an active dialogue took place on matters related to topical European security issues, including, *inter alia*, confidence- and security-building measures (CSBMs), military transparency, security sector governance and reform (SSG/R), the Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security, small arms and light weapons and stockpiles of conventional ammunition, military doctrine, implementation of the UN Security Council resolutions 1540 (2004) and 1325 (2000) and subregional military and defence co-operation. All three 2018 FSC Chairmanships actively stimulated discussions by organizing a total of 24 Security Dialogues.

By continuing promoting regional stability and comprehensive and co-operative security, all three 2018 FSC Chairmanships dedicated Security Dialogues to subregional military defence co-operation, which geographically spanned the Visegrad Group, the Western Balkans, as well as the Nordic and Baltic Sea Region.

Under the Chairmanship of Slovakia, the 28th Annual Implementation Assessment Meeting took place in Vienna on 27 and 28 February during which the participating States discussed the present and future implementation of agreed CSBMs. The issue of CSBMs was accorded specific attention during the tenure of the three 2018 FSC Chairmanships, in particular their decision to reinvigorate the discussions within the FSC's Working Group A. Following this decision, delegations that have tabled Vienna Document Plus proposals have been invited to present their proposals and thereby re-opened an in-depth exchange of views among the participating States. Furthermore, Slovenia dedicated its Chairmanship's first Security Dialogue to the topic of CSBMs and arms control. As an innovative form of a CSBM, Slovenia organized a special session of the FSC to commemorate the centenary of the end of the First World War, which addressed the origins and consequences of one of the deadliest conflicts Europe has ever witnessed, with a view to possible lessons for the current security context.

Under the Chairmanship of Slovenia, the seventh Annual Discussion on the Implementation of the Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security was held on 13 June 2018 in Vienna. On the margins of the Annual Discussion, Slovenia organized a Code of Conduct side event, which included a national tables' fair, as well as a special panel discussion on the challenges presented by the phenomenon of private military and security companies. To pave the way for next year's 25th anniversary of the adoption of the Code of Conduct, Sweden dedicated two Security Dialogues to the Code of Conduct, focusing on the democratic control of armed forces and on rights and obligations of military personnel. In May, a regional seminar on the Code of Conduct was organized in Bucharest, Romania, and in November, a symposium on the Code of Conduct and its questionnaire was held in Berlin, Germany.

Throughout the year, significant efforts were made to promote gender mainstreaming and equality, increasing the number of female high-level guest speakers and integrating gender perspectives in the work of the FSC. During the 68th joint meeting of the Forum for Security Co-operation and the Permanent Council on the topic of SSG/R, co-chaired by Slovakia and Italy in February, all speakers underlined the importance of including women to achieve an inclusive security sector under democratic control. Slovenia dedicated one Security Dialogue to women, peace and security and was highly active in promoting the work of the OSCE MenEngage Network, including the launch of its webpage on 9 May. On 31 October, Sweden organized a special session of the FSC to commemorate the 18th anniversary of the adoption of UN Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), which was followed by the release of the OSCE handbook "Gender in military operations: guidance for military personnel working at the tactical level in peace support operations" and a panel discussion co-organized by Sweden and the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) on the role of military commanders in preventing sexual and gender based violence.

In accordance with the tasks assigned to the FSC in Ministerial Council Decision No. 10/17 on small arms and light weapons and stockpiles of conventional ammunition (SALW/SCA), all three FSC Chairmanships conducted a range of activities related to these issues. A significant achievement in this area of work was the adoption of FSC Decision No. 1/18 on best practice guide on "Deactivation of small arms and light weapons" (FSC.DEC/1/18/Corr.2), during the Slovak Chairmanship of the FSC. Slovakia also dedicated Security Dialogues to international projects in the field of SALW and SCA and launched the

preparations of the OSCE's contribution to the third UN Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in SALW in All Its Aspects (RevCon3) held from 18 to 29 June 2018 in New York, while Slovenia addressed the importance of export controls and deactivation in countering the illicit spread of SALW, also in light of RevCon3. On 2 and 3 October, Sweden and the Conflict Prevention Centre hosted the Biennial Meeting to Assess the Implementation of the OSCE Documents on SALW and SCA in Vienna, which *inter alia*, included discussions on the implications of the RevCon3 outcomes on the OSCE's work, the OSCE Plan of Action on SALW, the OSCE Handbooks of Best Practices on SALW and SCA and the OSCE assistance mechanism. Sweden also dedicated a Security Dialogue to the topic of countering trafficking of SALW in the Öresund region.

Another topic highlighted throughout the year was the issue of non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and UN Security Council resolution 1540 (2004). Slovakia, Slovenia and Sweden dedicated Security Dialogues to the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization and its contribution to the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, nuclear security in the OSCE area, as well as international co-operation as a tool for supporting the implementation of UN Security Council resolution 1540 (2004). All Security Dialogues were attended by high-level keynote speakers, which gives an indication of the interest among other international organizations to co-operate with the OSCE on this important issue.

The FSC contributed within its mandate to the Annual Security Review Conference, held from 26 to 28 June 2018 through sessions, focusing on politico-military elements, including conventional arms control and CSBMs.

All three FSC Chairmanships co-operated closely with the Italian OSCE Chairmanship and the Permanent Council on cross-dimensional issues of relevance to both bodies in line with the OSCE's concept of comprehensive and indivisible security. To this end, four joint meetings of the FSC and Permanent Council were held: one on SSG/R, two on the Structured Dialogue, and one on the Mediterranean and the security of the OSCE's southern region.

In conclusion, the FSC has continued in 2018 to provide an important platform for dialogue and decisions, while at the same time providing participating States a forum to discuss matters related to arms control and CSBMs in general, and issues related to the Vienna Document in particular. The large number of proposals for Vienna Document Plus decisions indicates that many participating States recognize the need and call for a Vienna Document modernization. Therefore, it is important to continue the important efforts made in the Working Group A.

Second day of the Twenty-Fifth Meeting
MC(25) Journal No. 2, Agenda item 7

**MINISTERIAL STATEMENT ON THE
NEGOTIATIONS ON THE TRANSDNIESTRIAN SETTLEMENT
PROCESS IN THE “5+2” FORMAT**

1. The Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the participating States of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe:
2. Recall the past Ministerial Statements on the work of the Permanent Conference on Political Issues in the Framework of the Negotiation Process for the Transdniestrian Settlement in the “5+2” format;
3. Reiterate their strong resolve to attain a comprehensive, peaceful and sustainable settlement of the Transdniestrian conflict based on the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Moldova within its internationally recognized borders with a special status for Transdniestria that fully guarantees the human, political, economic and social rights of its population;
4. Recall the output-oriented approach reaffirmed by the Hamburg and Vienna Ministerial Statements and in this context commend the Sides for major achievements since the Vienna Ministerial Meeting on four out of the five agreements reached in 2017 on priority issues, namely on apostilization of educational documents issued in Transdniestria, the functioning of the Latin Script Schools, the use of farmlands in Dubasari district and on the opening of the bridge across the Dniester/Nistru River between villages Gura Bicului and Bychok as well as the agreement on the participation of vehicles from Transdniestria in international road traffic signed in April 2018, and for having achieved substantial progress on the implementation of the 2017 telecommunication agreement;
5. Welcome the commitment of the Sides to continue to work toward the full implementation of all agreements expressed in the Protocol of the “5+2” meeting in Rome on 29–30 May 2018, the 2017 Vienna protocol and the 2016 Berlin protocol, thus contributing to building a solid basis for further advancing the settlement process;
6. Call upon the Sides to continue to work at all levels to achieve tangible progress on all three baskets of the agreed agenda for the negotiation process: socio-economic issues, general legal and humanitarian issues and human rights, and a comprehensive settlement, including institutional, political and security issues. We encourage the Sides to build upon the progress already achieved on socio-economic issues this year to achieve tangible results in other areas of the agenda;

7. Underline the importance of the Permanent Conference on Political Issues in the Framework of the Negotiation Process for the Transdniestrian Settlement in the “5+2” format as the only mechanism to achieve a comprehensive and sustainable settlement, recall the commitment of the Sides to the result-oriented approach, which is key to the rhythmical work of the negotiation process at all its levels, and reaffirm the important role the OSCE plays in supporting this process;
8. Call upon the Sides to continue to engage, under the Slovak OSCE Chairmanship, in the negotiation process within the existing negotiating formats and in accordance with the internationally agreed parameters as referred to in paragraph 3;
9. Applaud the commitment, leadership and political will of the Sides which led to the resolution of a number of long-standing issues, as well as the unified and active approach by the mediators and observers in the Permanent Conference on Political Issues in the Framework of the Negotiation Process for the Transdniestrian Settlement in the “5+2” format in the course of their activities in 2018;
10. Encourage the mediators and observers of the OSCE, the Russian Federation, Ukraine, the European Union and the United States of America to continue to co-ordinate their efforts and to make full use of their collective potential to promote progress in achieving a comprehensive resolution of the Transdniestrian conflict.

Second day of the Twenty-Fifth Meeting
MC(25) Journal No. 2, Agenda item 7

DECLARATION ON THE DIGITAL ECONOMY AS A DRIVER FOR PROMOTING CO-OPERATION, SECURITY AND GROWTH

1. We, the members of the Ministerial Council of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, recall the provisions of the OSCE Strategy Document for the Economic and Environmental Dimension adopted in Maastricht in 2003, the Ministerial Council Declaration on Strengthening Good Governance and Combating Corruption, Money-Laundering and the Financing of Terrorism adopted in Dublin in 2012, Ministerial Council Decision No. 4/16 on strengthening good governance and promoting connectivity adopted in Hamburg in 2016, and Ministerial Council Decision No. 8/17 on economic participation adopted in Vienna in 2017.
2. We have seen through the 26th OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum process that the digital economy plays an increasingly important role as a driver for innovation, competitiveness, growth and connectivity in the OSCE area and that the impact of digital transformation on our economies and societies is already extensive and continues to grow.
3. We recognize that there are both opportunities and challenges in an increasingly digital world. The emerging and fast-evolving implications of digital transformation are not only leading to progress and prosperity, but also to the emergence of new or enhanced security threats and challenges.
4. We are committed to ensure the greatest possible access to the Internet and its benefits. Digitalization and an open, secure, reliable, interoperable and truly global Internet are enablers for inclusive economic growth. We recognize that the free flow of and access to information, including on the Internet, are essential for the digital economy and beneficial to development.
5. Digital transformation is having a positive impact on our economies and societies and so has the potential to enhance our co-operation within the economic and environmental dimension with a view to fostering sustainable and inclusive economic growth and development, connectivity, transparency and accountability.
6. We recognize the potential for digital transformation to contribute to the implementation of the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

7. We believe that some of the areas where the dialogue and co-operation of the OSCE participating States should be further strengthened include: assessing the security aspects of the digital economy, in the context of, *inter alia*, anti-money-laundering and combating the financing of terrorism (AML/CFT); promoting security of and in the use of information and communications technologies (ICTs) in the private sector, including among small and medium-sized enterprises; and encouraging the sharing of experiences.

8. In order to maximise the benefits and mitigate the security risks associated with digital transformation, we are committed to strengthening our co-operation including on:

- Promoting an enabling environment for digital innovation in the business sector;
- Fostering competition in the digital economy;
- Bridging the digital divides, including through collaboration between higher education institutions;
- Promoting international labour standards;
- Promoting better social policies;
- Strengthening good governance and promoting connectivity;
- Upholding the rule of law and protecting human rights;
- Broadening access to digital technologies and services in all sectors of the economy;
- Exchanging experiences on digital transformation, digitalisation of government and innovative models.

9. We recognize that e-government and good governance play a crucial role in modernizing and increasing efficiency in public administration and contribute to the promotion of better policy-making, transparency, integrity, accountability and the prevention of corruption. We recognize that we need to increase our efforts to advance the digital transformation of the public sector as to offer more effective, accountable and user-centric public services.

10. To address the digital divides and promote inclusive economic participation, more attention should be given to widening access to digital technologies and the development of skills and reskilling required in the digital economy to enable equal opportunities, in particular for women, youth and persons with disabilities.

11. We acknowledge that the digital economy creates new opportunities for women, whose economic empowerment and participation contribute to economic development, sustainable growth and the promotion of inclusive societies.

12. We welcome the substantial discussions held in the framework of the 26th OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum process, under the guidance of the 2018 Italian OSCE Chairmanship, on how to achieve economic progress and security through innovation, human capital development and good public and corporate governance.

13. We acknowledge that rapid advances in the digital economy are causing fundamental changes in many aspects of life, which may require updating national legislation and policies, while ensuring conformity with international law and OSCE commitments, including, but not limited to, those regarding human rights. Mindful of the role parliamentarians can play in this regard, we note the contribution of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly to the discussion on the digitalization of our economies.

14. We welcome the decision of the incoming 2019 Slovak OSCE Chairmanship to continue the discussions initiated by the 2018 Italian OSCE Chairmanship on the topic of digital transformation. We encourage future OSCE Chairmanships to continue these discussions on the impact of the ongoing digital transformation on our economies and societies and therefore on our common security.



Second day of the Twenty-Fifth Meeting
MC(25) Journal No. 2, Agenda item 7

**DECLARATION ON
THE ROLE OF YOUTH IN CONTRIBUTING TO PEACE
AND SECURITY EFFORTS**

1. We, the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the participating States of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, acknowledge that youth are an important part of society and the role that they can play in supporting participating States in the implementation of commitments in all three dimensions.
2. We recall the OSCE commitments relating to youth, built upon relevant provisions of the Helsinki Final Act, the 2014 Basel Ministerial Council Declaration on Youth, the 2015 Belgrade Ministerial Council Declaration on Youth and Security.
3. We take note of United Nations Security Council resolutions 2250 (2015) and 2419 (2018), on youth in the maintenance of international peace and security.
4. We take note of the efforts of the current and previous OSCE Chairmanships and the work carried out by participating States to advance the youth, peace and security agenda, such as the OSCE conference on “Working with Youth and for Youth: Strengthening Security and Co-operation Online”, held in Málaga, Spain, on 25 and 26 May 2017.
5. We recognize the role youth can play in contributing to a culture of peace, dialogue, justice and peaceful coexistence, trust and reconciliation.
6. We invite the Partners for Co-operation to voluntarily join us in affirming this declaration.

MC.DOC/3/18
7 December 2018
Attachment

Original: ENGLISH

**INTERPRETATIVE STATEMENT UNDER
PARAGRAPH IV.1(A)6 OF THE RULES OF PROCEDURE
OF THE ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY AND
CO-OPERATION IN EUROPE**

By the delegation of Norway (also on behalf of Canada, Denmark, Finland, Iceland and Sweden):

“Mr. Chairperson,

On the adoption of the Declaration on the Role of Youth in Contributing to Peace and Security Efforts, I would like to make the following interpretative statement on behalf of Canada, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Sweden and Norway.

The Declaration, though being short and weaker than we would have preferred, takes note of *inter alia* United Nations Security Council resolution 2250, which calls on all relevant actors to consider instituting mechanisms to promote a culture of peace, tolerance, intercultural and interreligious dialogue.

We acknowledge youth’s role in peace and security and underline the importance of the participation of women and the incorporation of gender perspectives in peace efforts.

The resolution outlines a long range of areas where youth can have such a role.

We encourage coming Chairmanships to explore ways to include youth in the work on security in line with this UN resolution.

Norway requests that this statement be attached to the Declaration, and reflected in the journal of the day.

Thank you.”

Second day of the Twenty-Fifth Meeting
MC(25) Journal No. 2, Agenda item 7

DECLARATION ON SECURITY AND CO-OPERATION IN THE MEDITERRANEAN

1. We, the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the participating States of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, reaffirm that the security of the OSCE area is inextricably linked to that of the Mediterranean region, as acknowledged in the Helsinki Final Act, and affirmed in the 2010 Astana Commemorative Declaration and in the 2014 Ministerial Council Declaration on Co-operation with the Mediterranean Partners.
2. We recognize that, since our meeting in Basel in 2014, this link between security in the OSCE area and security in the Mediterranean region has become all the more relevant, as has our co-operation with our Mediterranean Partners, given the growing range of challenges and opportunities stemming from the Mediterranean region and beyond. We therefore call for Mediterranean-related issues to be clearly reflected throughout the relevant work of the OSCE across the three dimensions of comprehensive security, and for greater engagement in advancing a common approach in tackling the related challenges, many of which are transnational and cross-dimensional in nature, and in seizing emerging opportunities, in a spirit of genuine partnership, co-operation, and ownership.
3. Against this background, reaffirming the 2014 Ministerial Council Declaration on Co-operation with the Mediterranean Partners, we reaffirm the relevance and value of the OSCE Mediterranean Partnership and we welcome the high-level political participation in OSCE Mediterranean conferences, most recently in the 2017 Palermo Conference and in the 2018 Malaga Conference. We call for this engagement to be translated into enhanced action-oriented dialogue with the Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation, defining a more strategic approach to ensuring the continuity and sustainability of the Partnership's achievements.
4. We look forward to the 25th anniversary of the Mediterranean Contact Group in 2019 as a timely opportunity to discuss and take stock of the Mediterranean Partnership, with a view to providing enhanced support to its mechanisms, including through the Partnership Fund, and collectively identifying areas of common concern that require sustained engagement over the medium to long term.
5. We call for the OSCE to intensify practical co-operation with the Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation in areas of common interest where the OSCE can bring added value. In particular, we appreciate the initiatives that the OSCE has developed in recent years in increasingly relevant areas for Mediterranean co-operation, such as migration,

environmental and energy co-operation, combating trafficking in human beings along migration routes, countering trafficking in cultural property, and addressing other challenges, including cyber/ICT security in a manner consistent with the OSCE's comprehensive approach to security. We support ongoing OSCE activities in these areas and would welcome further and stronger engagement with the Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation. We also welcome initiatives aimed at fostering co-operation on Mediterranean-related issues between the OSCE and other relevant international organizations, in accordance with the 1999 Platform for Co-operative Security and in the spirit of the OSCE Mediterranean Partnership.

6. Strongly concerned about the links between illicit trafficking, organized criminal groups and the financing of terrorism, in this regard we welcome efforts undertaken by the OSCE and by the Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation to prevent and combat all forms of trafficking, in particular trafficking in human beings and illicit trafficking in cultural property, including objects of religious origin. To this end, we encourage the OSCE to continue fostering co-operation among law enforcement and training agencies for combating all forms of trafficking, which pose specific challenges to security in the Mediterranean area.

7. We reaffirm our condemnation of terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, as it constitutes one of the most serious threats to international peace and security, and our firm rejection of the identification of terrorism with any ethnicity, nationality or religion. We reiterate our resolve to intensify work with the Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation to combat this threat. In this context, we call for co-ordinated and action-oriented initiatives to prevent and counter terrorism, violent extremism and radicalization that lead to terrorism, while recognizing the leading role of the United Nations in the international efforts in this area. Moreover, as acknowledged most recently by the OSCE-wide Counter-Terrorism Conference held in Rome in May 2018, we reaffirm the need to tackle the growing threat posed by the flow of foreign terrorist fighters, returning or relocated, particularly from conflict zones to the countries of origin or nationality, or to third countries, in line with UN Security Council resolution 2396 (2017).

8. Noting the crucial role that sustainable development, economic growth and connectivity play in fostering common security, we note with appreciation the OSCE initiatives aimed at strengthening the dialogue with the Mediterranean Partners on economic and environmental issues, especially the recent ones on energy, based on the sharing of information and the exchange of best practices. We look forward to intensified engagement between the OSCE and the Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation in areas of common interest and concern, including the role of energy in fostering growth and co-operation, energy security and opportunities offered by renewable sources of energy, in line with OSCE commitments.

9. We underscore the continuing relevance of the respect for all human rights and fundamental freedoms as an integral part of the OSCE comprehensive concept of security. We also draw attention to the important and positive role played by youth in enhancing security and stability in the OSCE area and in the Mediterranean region and encourage OSCE initiatives aimed at promoting youth participation and youth engagement, which foster dialogue and co-operation among Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation and OSCE participating States.

10. We welcome the interaction between the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly and the Partners for Co-operation's parliaments as well as the organization of an annual

Parliamentary Forum on the Mediterranean. We also encourage the Partners for Co-operation to participate in these events.

11. We encourage the Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation to voluntarily adopt and implement OSCE principles, norms and commitments. We welcome the interest expressed by Partners in raising the profile of the OSCE in their countries, including through co-operation on projects and other activities, and their higher-level representation at relevant OSCE conferences and events.

MC.DOC/4/18
7 December 2018
Attachment 1

ENGLISH
Original: RUSSIAN

**INTERPRETATIVE STATEMENT UNDER
PARAGRAPH IV.1(A)6 OF THE RULES OF PROCEDURE
OF THE ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY AND
CO-OPERATION IN EUROPE**

By the delegation of the Russian Federation:

“In connection with the adopted Declaration on Security and Co-operation in the Mediterranean, the Russian delegation would like to make the following statement.

Russia joined the consensus on this decision, wishing to stimulate more active co-operation in the Mediterranean region, safeguard its security and contribute to combating the threats that arise there.

At the same time, we are disappointed that, because of the position of certain States, the document does not include an important provision on combating discrimination against Christians, Muslims, Jews and members of other religions. This is particularly relevant in the light of the religious persecution and interconfessional tension in the region. We would recall that the Mediterranean is the cradle of three world religions. The refusal of a number of countries to confirm the commitments in this area set out in particular in the Declaration on Co-operation with the Mediterranean Partners (MC.DOC/9/14) adopted at the 2014 Ministerial Council meeting in Basel is surprising and weakens the Declaration adopted today.

In view of the absence of corresponding provisions in the Declaration adopted here, we regard the aforementioned Declaration (MC.DOC/9/14) as the basis for work with the OSCE Partners for Co-operation in this area.

We once again recall the need to strengthen the OSCE’s instruments for safeguarding religious tolerance, including through the elaboration of separate ministerial declarations in defence of Christians and Muslims in accordance with the mandate of the Basel Ministerial Council.

The Russian delegation requests that this statement be attached to the adopted Declaration and to the journal of the day.”

MC.DOC/4/18
7 December 2018
Attachment 2

Original: ENGLISH

**INTERPRETATIVE STATEMENT UNDER
PARAGRAPH IV.1(A)6 OF THE RULES OF PROCEDURE
OF THE ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY AND
CO-OPERATION IN EUROPE**

The delegation of Austria, in its capacity as EU Presidency, passed the floor to the representative of the European Union, who delivered the following statement:

“In connection with the Ministerial Council declaration just adopted on the security and co-operation in the Mediterranean, the European Union wishes to make the following interpretative statement under the relevant provisions of the OSCE Rules of Procedure (also on behalf of Montenegro):

The European Union joined consensus on this text in acknowledging that the security of the OSCE region is inextricably linked to that of the Mediterranean region.

At the same time, the EU wishes to underline the importance it places on gender equality in all work of the OSCE. We regret that the inclusion of language on the promotion of gender equality and women’s empowerment did not meet consensus in light of the important role that they play for our common security.

I request that this interpretative statement be attached to the journal of the day and to the declaration in question.”

Second day of the Twenty-Fifth Meeting
MC(25) Journal No. 2, Agenda item 7

**DECLARATION ON
OSCE EFFORTS IN THE FIELD OF NORMS AND BEST PRACTICES
ON SMALL ARMS AND LIGHT WEAPONS AND STOCKPILES OF
CONVENTIONAL AMMUNITION**

1. We, the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the participating States of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, recognize the importance of OSCE norms and best practices aimed at combating illicit trafficking in all its aspects with regard to small arms and light weapons (SALW) and stockpiles of conventional ammunition (SCA) and their contribution to the reduction and prevention of the excessive and destabilizing accumulation and uncontrolled spread thereof.
2. We reaffirm all OSCE commitments related to SALW and SCA, including the OSCE Documents on SALW and SCA, which establish *inter alia* relevant norms and best practices.
3. We stress the importance of continuing the implementation of Ministerial Council Decision No. 10/17 on SALW and SCA.
4. We are concerned about the negative impact of illicit trafficking in SALW on our societies, noting in particular the impact on women and children.
5. We recognize the OSCE's contribution to and note the outcomes of the third United Nations Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in SALW in All Its Aspects (Programme of Action), also reviewing progress made in the implementation of its International Tracing Instrument, which took place from 18 to 29 June 2018.
6. We welcome the commencing of biennial meetings to assess the implementation of the OSCE Documents on SALW and SCA in order to ensure that OSCE's SALW- and SCA-related efforts are more targeted and integral to facilitating implementation of the Programme of Action, and we welcome the conduct of the first such meeting which took place in Vienna on 2 and 3 October 2018, which served as a platform for stocktaking of existing OSCE norms and best practices, and areas for their improvement, and co-operation.
7. We appreciate the adoption of the OSCE Best Practice Guide on Minimum Standards for National Procedures for the Deactivation of Small Arms and Light Weapons.

8. We recognize the contribution of such OSCE efforts to the effective implementation of the Programme of Action, and the pursuit of relevant UN Sustainable Development Goals.
9. We acknowledge the need for the OSCE to continue to enhance its SALW- and SCA-related norms and best practices and their implementation.
10. We underline our resolve to jointly address the risks and threats by making full use of the OSCE norms and best practices.
11. We welcome the broad range of OSCE assistance in the field of SALW- and SCA-related norms and best practices and we acknowledge the valuable contributions of the recipient OSCE participating States to the successful implementation of these assistance projects. We recognize the ongoing efforts with regard to the establishment of appropriate sustainable national management processes, including the respective structures and procedures.
12. We encourage participating States, on a voluntary basis, to continue providing expertise, extrabudgetary contributions and resources to support the work within the FSC on upgrading and further developing norms and best practices on SALW and SCA.
13. We invite the OSCE Partners for Co-operation to voluntarily implement OSCE commitments on SALW and SCA.



**Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
Ministerial Council**

MC.DEC/1/18/Corr.1¹
5 December 2018

Original: ENGLISH

**DECISION No. 1/18
OSCE CHAIRMANSHIP IN THE YEAR 2020**

The Ministerial Council,

Decides that Albania will exercise the function of the OSCE Chairmanship in the year 2020.

1 Includes corrections to the translation of attachment 2.

**INTERPRETATIVE STATEMENT UNDER
PARAGRAPH IV.1(A)6 OF THE RULES OF PROCEDURE
OF THE ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY AND
CO-OPERATION IN EUROPE**

By the delegation of Serbia:

“The delegation of Serbia would like to make the following interpretative statement under paragraph IV.1(A)6 of the OSCE Rules of Procedure in connection with the adoption of the Ministerial Council decision on the OSCE Chairmanship in the year 2020.

The Republic of Serbia has joined the consensus on this decision with a belief that entrusting the chairing of our Organization to the Republic of Albania will represent an opportunity for the promotion of the Western Balkans region, contributing to fostering of regional co-operation, including the aspirations of all our countries for accession to the European Union.

However, bearing in mind the differing views of OSCE participating States on the issue of Kosovo, as well as Albania’s strong support and leading role in promoting the unilaterally declared independence of the Republic of Serbia’s Autonomous Province of Kosovo and Metohija (as revealed, *inter alia*, in Albania’s interpretative statement attached to Ministerial Council Decision No. 1/12 and in the Permanent Council statement distributed under reference number PC.DEL/1195/18), we expect that Albania will, as every Chairmanship, set aside its national agenda during 2020 and perform its duties in a responsible, transparent and unbiased way, in accordance with the provisions of UN Security Council resolution 1244 (1999), OSCE norms, principles and commitments, deriving in particular from the 1975 Helsinki Final Act, and with full adherence to the OSCE’s status neutrality on the issue of Kosovo.

In that context, we have joined the consensus with the understanding that all decisions of Albania during its Chairmanship-in-Office of the OSCE, with regard to the issue of Kosovo and Metohija, and OMiK will be taken in a transparent manner, in full co-operation, consultation and agreement with all Troika members.

We welcome the commitment of Albania to perform its Chairmanship duties in accordance with the OSCE Rules of Procedure, and with full adherence to Decision No. 8 on the role of the OSCE Chairmanship-in-Office adopted at the Tenth Meeting of the Ministerial Council in Porto, 2002, in particular its paragraph 2 defining that the Chairmanship-in-Office shall ensure ‘that its actions are not inconsistent with positions agreed by all the participating States and that the whole spectrum of opinions of participating States is taken into account’,

as expressed in the letter of the Foreign Minister of Albania addressed to the First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Serbia dated 28 November 2018.

We expect the Albanian Chairmanship to respect and preserve the principle of consensus in the OSCE, and to refrain from any action that is not consistent with the status neutrality of our Organization, based on the UN Security Council resolution 1244 (1999), which remains the only framework for the engagement of the OSCE Mission in Kosovo.

We would like to use this opportunity to once again congratulate our neighbour, the Republic of Albania, for assuming this important duty, and wish to offer our full support. Serbia stands ready to share its experience from its 2015 OSCE Chairmanship-in-Office.

We request that this statement be attached to the decision adopted, and included in the journal of the day.”

**INTERPRETATIVE STATEMENT UNDER
PARAGRAPH IV.1(A)6 OF THE RULES OF PROCEDURE
OF THE ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY AND
CO-OPERATION IN EUROPE**

By the delegation of the Russian Federation:

“In joining the consensus regarding the OSCE Ministerial Council decision on Albania’s Chairmanship of the OSCE in the year 2020, we expect Albania to closely adhere to the provisions of the 2002 Porto OSCE Ministerial Council Decision No. 8 on the role of the OSCE Chairmanship-in-Office, ensuring that its actions are not inconsistent with positions agreed by all the participating States and that the whole spectrum of opinions of participating States is taken into account in these actions.

We also expect that public statements issued by the OSCE Chairmanship-in-Office will be in line with OSCE Permanent Council Decision No. 485 of 28 June 2002 and comply with the fundamental OSCE consensus rule.

This applies fully to the OSCE’s activities regarding Kosovo on the basis of United Nations Security Council resolution 1244.

I request that this statement be attached to the adopted OSCE Ministerial Council decision and included in the journal of the day.”

1 Includes corrections to the translation.



**Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
Ministerial Council
Milan 2018**

MC.DEC/2/18
7 December 2018

Original: ENGLISH

Second day of the Twenty-Fifth Meeting
MC(25) Journal No. 2, Agenda item 7

**DECISION No. 2/18
TIME AND PLACE OF THE NEXT MEETING OF THE OSCE
MINISTERIAL COUNCIL**

The Ministerial Council,

Decides that the Twenty-Sixth Meeting of the OSCE Ministerial Council will be held in Bratislava on 5 and 6 December 2019.



Second day of the Twenty-Fifth Meeting
MC(25) Journal No. 2, Agenda item 7

DECISION No. 3/18

SAFETY OF JOURNALISTS

The Ministerial Council,

Reaffirming all relevant OSCE commitments on the right to freedom of expression, freedom of the media, and free flow of information, including the 1975 Helsinki Final Act, and the 1990 Copenhagen Document, where the participating States reaffirmed that the right to freedom of expression includes freedom to hold opinions and to receive and impart information and ideas without interference by public authority and regardless of frontiers,

Mindful that everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression, in accordance with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, particularly Article 19, and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), particularly Article 19, and that it constitutes one of the essential foundations of a democratic society and one of the basic conditions for its progress and development,

Mindful also that any restrictions on the right to freedom of expression may only be such as are provided by law and are necessary on the grounds set out in paragraph 3 of Article 19 of the ICCPR,

Reaffirming that independent media are essential to a free and open society and accountable systems of government and are of particular importance in safeguarding human rights and fundamental freedoms, as stated in the 1991 Document of the Moscow Meeting of the Conference on the Human Dimension of the CSCE,

Acknowledging that journalism and technology are evolving and that this contributes to the public debate, while it may also expand the range of risks that undermine the safety of journalists,

Taking note of the importance of promoting and protecting the safety of journalists for the implementation of the relevant Sustainable Development Goal and Targets of the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,

Recognizing that the work of journalists can put them, and their family members, at risk of violence, as well as of intimidation and harassment, including through digital technologies, which can deter journalists from continuing their work or lead to self-censorship,

Noting with concern that the use of undue restrictive measures against journalists can affect their safety, and prevents them from providing information to the public, and thus negatively affects the exercise of the right to freedom of expression,

Reaffirming that the media in their territory should enjoy unrestricted access to foreign news and information services, that the public will enjoy similar freedom to receive and impart information and ideas without interference by public authority regardless of frontiers, including through foreign publications and foreign broadcasts, and that any restriction in the exercise of this right will be prescribed by law and in accordance with international standards, as stated in the 1991 Document of the Moscow Meeting of the Conference on the Human Dimension of the CSCE,

Concerned that violations and abuses of the right to be free from arbitrary or unlawful interference with privacy may affect the safety of journalists,

Deeply concerned by all human rights violations and abuses committed in relation to the safety of journalists, including those involving killing, torture, enforced disappearance, arbitrary arrest, arbitrary detention and arbitrary expulsion, intimidation, harassment and threats of all forms, such as physical, legal, political, technological or economic, intended to suppress their work,

Concerned by the distinct risks faced by women journalists in relation to their work, including through digital technologies, and underlining the importance to ensure their greatest possible safety and that the experiences and concerns of women journalists are effectively addressed,

Recognizing the crucial role of journalists in covering elections, in particular in informing the public about candidates, their platforms and ongoing debates, and expressing serious concern about threats and violent attacks that journalists can face in this regard,

Recognizing the importance of investigative journalism, and that the ability of media to investigate, and to publish the results of their investigations, including on the Internet, without fear of reprisal, can play an important role in our societies, including in holding public institutions and officials accountable,

Alarmed that targeted campaigns undermining the work of journalists are increasing, eroding public trust and confidence in the credibility of journalism, and recognizing that this can increase the risk of threats and violence against journalists,

Also alarmed at instances in which political leaders, public officials and/or authorities intimidate, threaten, condone or fail to condemn violence against journalists,

Expressing deep concern at the growing threat to the safety of journalists posed, *inter alia*, by terrorist groups and criminal organizations,

Emphasizing also the particular risks with regard to the safety of journalists in the digital age, including the particular vulnerability of journalists to becoming targets of hacking or unlawful or arbitrary surveillance or interception of communications, undermining

enjoyment of their right to freedom of expression and their right to be free from arbitrary or unlawful interference with privacy,

Reiterating that participating States condemn all attacks on and harassment of journalists and will endeavour to hold those directly responsible for such attacks and harassment accountable, as stated at the 1994 Budapest CSCE Summit, and also recognizing that accountability for crimes against journalists is a key element in preventing future attacks,

Stressing the significance of commemoration of 2 November as the International Day to End Impunity for Crimes against Journalists (IDEI) proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly,

Noting with concern the climate of impunity that prevails when violent attacks committed against journalists remain unpunished, and recognizing the role of governments, legislators and the judiciary in enabling a safe working environment and ensuring safety of journalists by, *inter alia*, publicly condemning and bringing to justice all those responsible for crimes against journalists,

Recalling United Nations Security Council resolutions 1738 (2006) and 2222 (2015), which condemn all violations and abuses committed against journalists, media professionals and associated personnel in situations of armed conflict, and which state that journalists, media professionals and associated personnel engaged in dangerous professional missions in areas of armed conflict shall be considered as civilians and shall be protected as such, provided that they take no action adversely affecting their status as civilians,

Calls on participating States to:

1. Fully implement all OSCE commitments and their international obligations related to freedom of expression and media freedom, including by respecting, promoting and protecting the freedom to seek, receive and impart information regardless of frontiers;
2. Bring their laws, policies and practices, pertaining to media freedom, fully in compliance with their international obligations and commitments and to review and, where necessary, repeal or amend them so that they do not limit the ability of journalists to perform their work independently and without undue interference;
3. Condemn publicly and unequivocally all attacks and violence against journalists such as killing, torture, enforced disappearance, arbitrary arrest, arbitrary detention and arbitrary expulsion, intimidation, harassment, and threats of all forms, such as physical, legal, political, technological or economic, used to suppress their work and/or unduly force closure of their offices, including in conflict situations;
4. Also condemn publicly and unequivocally attacks on women journalists in relation to their work, such as sexual harassment, abuse, intimidation, threats and violence, including through digital technologies;
5. Urge the immediate and unconditional release of all journalists who have been arbitrarily arrested or detained, taken hostage or who have become victims of enforced disappearance;

6. Take effective measures to end impunity for crimes committed against journalists, by ensuring accountability as a key element in preventing future attacks, including by ensuring that law enforcement agencies carry out swift, effective and impartial investigations into acts of violence and threats against journalists, in order to bring all those responsible to justice, and ensure that victims have access to appropriate remedies;
7. Urge political leaders, public officials and/or authorities to refrain from intimidating, threatening or condoning – and to unequivocally condemn – violence against journalists, in order to reduce the risks or threats that journalists may face and avoid undermining trust in the credibility of journalists as well as respect for the importance of independent journalism;
8. Refrain from arbitrary or unlawful interference with journalists' use of encryption and anonymity technologies and refrain from employing unlawful or arbitrary surveillance techniques, noting that such acts infringe on the journalists' enjoyment of human rights, and could put them at potential risk of violence and threats to their safety;
9. Encourage State bodies and law enforcement agencies to engage in awareness-raising and training activities related to the need to ensure safety of journalists, and to promote the involvement of civil society in such activities, where appropriate;
10. Establish or strengthen, where possible, national data collection, analysis and reporting on attacks and violence against journalists;
11. Ensure that defamation laws do not carry excessive sanctions or penalties that could undermine the safety of journalists and/or effectively censor journalists and interfere with their mission of informing the public and, where necessary, to revise and repeal such laws, in compliance with participating States' obligations under international human rights law;
12. Implement more effectively the applicable legal framework for the protection of journalists and all relevant OSCE commitments;
13. Co-operate fully with the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, including on the issue of safety of journalists;
14. Encourage the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media's continued advocacy and promotion of safety of journalists in all OSCE participating States, in line with his/her mandate.

MC.DEC/3/18
7 December 2018
Attachment 1

Original: ENGLISH

**INTERPRETATIVE STATEMENT UNDER
PARAGRAPH IV.1(A)6 OF THE RULES OF PROCEDURE
OF THE ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY AND
CO-OPERATION IN EUROPE**

The delegation of Austria, in its capacity as EU Presidency, passed the floor to the representative of the European Union, who delivered the following statement:

“In connection with the adoption of this decision on the safety of journalists, I would like to make the following interpretative statement under paragraph IV.1(A)6 of the OSCE Rules of Procedure on behalf of the European Union and its Member States, Albania, Canada, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Ukraine and Montenegro:

We welcome the adoption of this important decision, which we believe will reinforce the efforts of the OSCE and all participating States on the pressing issue of safety of journalists.

As stated by the United Nations Human Rights Committee in its General Comment No. 34, journalism is a function shared by a wide range of actors. We regret that it was not possible to reach consensus on terminology that makes it explicitly clear that efforts to protect journalists should not be limited to those formally recognized as such, but should also cover support staff and others, such as ‘citizen journalists’, bloggers, social media activists and human rights defenders, who use new media to reach a mass audience. This remains the position of the European Union.

We also stress the importance of OSCE decisions on this topic being fully consistent with international standards including relevant resolutions adopted in the United Nations, in particular Human Rights Council resolution 39/6 of 27 September 2018 and General Assembly resolution 72/175 of 19 December 2017. We regret that consensus was not possible in this regard.

Mr. Chairperson, I request that this statement be attached to the decision and the journal of the day.”

MC.DEC/3/18
7 December 2018
Attachment 2

Original: ENGLISH

**INTERPRETATIVE STATEMENT UNDER
PARAGRAPH IV.1(A)6 OF THE RULES OF PROCEDURE
OF THE ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY AND
CO-OPERATION IN EUROPE**

By the delegation of the United States of America:

“We strongly support the safety of journalists and freedom of expression. We reiterate that any restrictions on the exercise of freedom of expression, including the freedom to seek, receive, and impart information and ideas of all kinds, for members of the media and members of the public, must be consistent with States’ obligations under Article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), which obligates States Parties to respect and ensure to all individuals within their territory and subject to their jurisdiction the right to freedom of expression. We understand any reference to ‘international standards’ in this regard to refer to such obligations. We understand the reaffirmation of language from the Document of the 1991 Moscow Meeting of the Conference of the Human Dimension of the CSCE to be in the context of the concerns addressed at that Meeting.

Thank you.

Mr. Chairperson, we request that this statement be attached to the decision and the journal of the day.”



Second day of the Twenty-Fifth Meeting
MC(25) Journal No. 2, Agenda item 7

**DECISION No. 4/18
PREVENTING AND COMBATING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN**

The Ministerial Council,

Reaffirming that the promotion and protection of equal rights and opportunities for all are essential to democracy and economic development and therefore to security, stability and sustainable peace in the OSCE area,

Determined to ensure the full and equal enjoyment by women and girls of human rights and fundamental freedoms,

Reaffirming all relevant OSCE commitments, including Ministerial Council Decision No. 14/04 on the 2004 OSCE Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality and Ministerial Council Decisions No. 15/05 and No. 7/14 on preventing and combating violence against women,

Taking note of the holding of the second Gender Equality Review Conference, conducted in Vienna in June 2017, which, *inter alia*, discussed progress and gaps in the implementation of OSCE commitments in the field of preventing and combating violence against women,

Reaffirming the United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women and recalling that OSCE commitments on human rights and gender equality are inspired by the international human rights framework, including the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, and UN Security Council resolution 1325 on women and peace and security,

Mindful of the importance of preventing and combating violence against women and girls for the implementation of the relevant Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,

Recognizing that inequality between men and women is a root cause of violence against women and girls, and that, in particular, discrimination and economic inequalities, including lack of economic independence, can increase women's vulnerability to violence,

Deeply concerned by the persistence of violence against women and girls in all its forms as one of the most pervasive impediments to their full enjoyment of all human rights and to women's full, equal and effective participation in political, economic, and public life,

Noting that violence against women and girls can cause death or physical, sexual, psychological, economic, political and social harm or suffering to girls and women of all ages, and results directly or indirectly in shorter- and longer-term societal, political and economic costs,

Noting also that violence against women and girls takes many forms, which can include: domestic violence; sexual violence; harmful practices; trafficking in human beings, sexual and other types of exploitation; and sexual harassment,

Recognizing that women and girls may suffer many different kinds of discrimination, sometimes in combination, which exposes them to increased risk of violence, and that such combinations can lead to further discrimination,

Also recognizing the important roles played by the armed forces, law enforcement agencies, judicial systems and other legal professionals, in addressing all forms of violence against women and girls,

Recognizing further that abuse, threats, and harassment, including sexual harassment, have become increasingly common, especially through digital technologies, and may silence women's and girls' voices in the public sphere,

Mindful that women engaged in professional activities with public exposure and/or in the interest of society, are more likely to be exposed to specific forms of violence or abuse, threats, and harassment, in relation to their work,

Considering that adolescence is an important phase in the social development of a person, and recognizing that this phase is often affected by persistent inequalities, negative attitudes, behaviours, and gender stereotypes that can put girls and young women at heightened risk of discrimination and violence,

Recognizing the importance of actively engaging men and boys in efforts towards elimination of discrimination and all forms of violence against women and girls, including by addressing the root causes of gender inequality and violence and by raising awareness about the impact of negative attitudes, behaviours, and gender stereotypes that can underlie and perpetuate discrimination and violence,

Noting the efforts of the OSCE MenEngage Network¹ in raising awareness about the important role that men and boys can play in the elimination of discrimination and all forms of violence against women and girls,

Recognizing that sexual harassment in public and private spaces, in particular in the workplace and in educational institutions, has a damaging impact on women and girls' full

1 The OSCE MenEngage Network is not an affiliated network of the MenEngage Alliance. The OSCE MenEngage Network is a closed network within OSCE.

enjoyment of human rights and equal opportunities, thus impairing their ability to remain and/or advance in the workplace and in educational institutions,

Acknowledging the role of civil society as an important partner of government, including at the local level, in preventing and combating violence against women and girls,

Taking note of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly's work to combat violence against women,

Calls on the participating States to:

1. Ensure access to justice, effective investigation, prosecution of perpetrators, as well as provide, while respecting their rights and privacy, adequate protection, rehabilitation and reintegration support for victims of all forms of violence against women and girls;
2. Take action, including through awareness-raising and capacity-building for the armed forces, law enforcement agencies, judicial systems and other legal professionals, on preventing and combating all forms of violence against women and girls;
3. Adopt measures, as appropriate, to encourage education on gender equality, human rights and non-violent behaviour thus contributing to the prevention of all forms of violence against women and girls, which can include: harmful practices, sexual violence, domestic violence, as well as sexual harassment;
4. Organize awareness-raising campaigns on the risks of specific forms of violence facing women and girls, including through digital technologies, and on their rights and the support available for victims of such violence;
5. Take action to address violence, abuse, threats, and harassment, including through digital technologies, directed at women;
6. Take measures, in consultation with companies that work on information and communication technologies (ICT), to address specific forms of violence faced by women and girls through digital technologies;
7. Encourage all relevant actors, including those involved in the political process, to contribute to preventing and combating all forms of violence against women, including those engaged in professional activities with public exposure and/or in the interest of society, by, *inter alia*, raising the issue in public debates, and developing awareness-raising initiatives and other appropriate measures, also considering the chilling impact of such violence on young women;
8. Incorporate initiatives into relevant national level policies and strategies to promote the engagement of men and boys in preventing and combating violence against women and girls, including by implementing awareness-raising activities focusing on the positive, equitable and non-violent roles men and boys can play in this regard, and by recognizing and addressing negative attitudes, behaviours, and gender stereotypes that perpetuate such violence;

9. Take measures to combat sexual harassment in public and private spaces, including in the workplace and in educational institutions, and encourage public and private employers to apply such measures;

10. Take measures to provide equal access to quality education for all girls; and strengthen the economic empowerment and economic independence of women, including by ensuring non-discriminatory employment policies and practices, providing equal access to education and training, equal remuneration for equal work, and equal access to and control over economic resources;

11. Encourage the involvement of civil society in preventing and combating violence against women and girls;

Tasks the relevant OSCE executive structures, in accordance with their mandates, to:

12. Assist participating States, upon their request, in improving their legal and policy framework and in implementing measures for preventing and combating all forms of violence against women and girls;

13. Continue co-operation with relevant international and regional organizations to collect sex-disaggregated data and statistics on the occurrence of all forms of violence against women and girls in the OSCE area;

14. Provide support to the participating States and civil society organizations for the exchange of good practices in preventing and combating all forms of violence against women and girls, including through the engagement of men and boys;

15. Support participating States, upon their request, in developing and reviewing legislation, policies, and measures to combat sexual harassment in private and public spaces, including in the workplace and educational institutions;

16. Continue to ensure full implementation of, and to review the need for strengthening and/or increasing training on, the OSCE Code of Conduct for the OSCE staff/mission members as well as the OSCE policy on the professional working environment, stressing a zero tolerance approach to sexual harassment, including through efforts by senior management.

17. Encourages the participating States and relevant OSCE executive structures to consider engaging in joint activities with the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly and its Special Representative on Gender Issues.

MC.DEC/4/18
7 December 2018
Attachment

Original: ENGLISH

**INTERPRETATIVE STATEMENT UNDER
PARAGRAPH IV.1(A)6 OF THE RULES OF PROCEDURE
OF THE ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY AND
CO-OPERATION IN EUROPE**

By the delegation of Canada (also on behalf of Albania, Austria-European Union, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Georgia, Iceland, Montenegro, Norway, Serbia, Switzerland, Ukraine and the United States of America):

“Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

In connection with the adoption of the decision, I would like to make the following interpretative statement under paragraph IV.1(A)6 of the OSCE Rules of Procedure on behalf of Albania, the European Union and its Member States, Georgia, Iceland, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Norway, Serbia, Switzerland, Ukraine, the United States, and Canada.

We have joined consensus on this decision because we are committed to eliminating all forms of violence against women and girls, one of the most pervasive impediments to the full enjoyment of their human rights. We welcome that the document refers to all forms of violence against women and girls, but regret that we were unable to include a specific reference to intimate partner violence that affects so many.

We would have liked to have seen a stronger decision that explicitly discussed some of the trends we see today in the OSCE region. Over the past several years, we have seen a growing number of attacks, threats, abuse, and harassment, including sexual harassment, targeted at women as they speak out as journalists, bloggers, politicians, civil society activists, or human rights defenders, often carried out through digital technologies. We must do more to prevent and eliminate these appalling acts, and we look to the OSCE’s institutions and field operations to support our efforts to eliminate them.

We also regret that it was not possible to reach consensus on language regarding preventing violence, including sexual violence, against women and girls in conflict situations. We must ensure there is no impunity for perpetrators.

We request that this interpretative statement be attached to the decision adopted and be included in the journal of the day.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.”



Second day of the Twenty-Fifth Meeting
MC(25) Journal No. 2, Agenda item 7

DECISION No. 5/18
HUMAN CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE DIGITAL ERA

The Ministerial Council,

Recalling OSCE principles and commitments on which our economic co-operation is based and bearing in mind the comprehensive approach of the OSCE to security,

Recalling the commitments related to human capital development contained in the OSCE Strategy Document for the Economic and Environmental Dimension adopted at the Maastricht Meeting of the Ministerial Council in 2003, Ministerial Council Decision No. 10/11 on promoting equal opportunity for women in the economic sphere adopted in Vilnius in 2011, the Ministerial Council Declaration on Youth adopted in Basel in 2014, Ministerial Council Decision No. 4/16 on strengthening good governance and promoting connectivity adopted in Hamburg in 2016, and Ministerial Council Decision No. 8/17 on economic participation adopted in Vienna in 2017,

Considering that the needs of the individual should be at the centre of economic growth and sustainable development, and aware that investment in human capital and promotion of knowledge and skills promote economic participation, social inclusion and sustainable growth which are interdependent and contribute to prosperity, trust, stability, security and co-operation in the OSCE area,

Taking into account the emerging and fast-evolving implications of digital transformation, which is leading to progress and prosperity, but also to the emergence of potential new or enhanced threats and challenges,

Aware that changes in the labour markets caused by digital transformation have the potential to widen social and economic disparities, and that there is a need for a stronger focus on the development of human capital, particularly for women, youth and persons with disabilities, especially in labour-intensive, low-skilled economic sectors,

Acknowledging that human capital development, including in the digital context, through its positive impact on an informed and qualified workforce, sustainable development, jobs and wealth creation, can positively contribute to making economies and societies more resilient to corruption,

Determined to promote lifelong learning and vocational and professional training throughout the working life as essential tools for human capital development and for reducing existing digital divides, particularly for women and girls in the areas of science, technology, engineering and mathematics,

Recognizing that there are opportunities and challenges associated with new forms of employment arising from the digital transformation of the economy, and that while these changes in the labour market may promote economic growth and job creation, some of the challenges may have an impact on job and social stability,

Building on the substantial discussions held in the framework of the 26th OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum “Promoting economic progress and security in the OSCE area through innovation, human capital development, and good public and corporate governance”,

Acknowledging, in the context of the digitalization of the economy, the need to strengthen the resilience of the workforce and to adapt labour market policy frameworks to promote: the creation of jobs with full respect for human dignity and human rights; sustainable and inclusive economic growth; and equal opportunities for the participation of women and men in the labour market,

Recognizing the potential for human capital development to contribute to the implementation of the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,

1. Encourages participating States to support the development of human capital so as to manage the transition to increasingly automated and digital economies, including through public-private partnerships and multi-stakeholder collaboration;
2. Encourages participating States to promote lifelong learning, starting from early education and continuing throughout working life, as a key pillar for managing this transition;
3. Calls upon participating States to promote access to quality education, training, upskilling and reskilling opportunities in order to enhance employability – promoting non-discriminatory access for women, youth and persons with disabilities and with special attention to those working in labour-intensive industries;
4. Encourages the participating States, as appropriate, to promote education, vocational training and retraining, in particular for women and girls, and especially in the fields of science, technology, engineering and mathematics, as a key measure to reduce digital divides and to advance the empowerment of women by promoting opportunities, including in the economy;
5. Invites the participating States to strengthen policy and institutional frameworks to facilitate innovative business models and a positive investment climate, to promote job creation and sustainable, inclusive economic growth;
6. Encourages the participating States to involve the private sector, civil society, trade and labour unions, academia, and other relevant stakeholders to identify and address the needs in terms of human capital development and to work together to develop and implement relevant policies and regulations;

7. Calls upon participating States to further examine opportunities and challenges associated with new forms of employment arising from the digital transformation of the economy, also with a view to ensuring adequate social protection;
8. Encourages the participating States to promote efforts against corruption in the education and training sectors, as well as open, equal and corruption-free access to education, digital skills and training opportunities;
9. Encourages participating States to make use of the OSCE to foster the exchange of best practices and to promote capacity-building initiatives in line with the provisions of this decision;
10. Encourages participating States to increase co-operation on human capital development, including with relevant international organizations, in areas such as facilitating and widening access to educational, research and training institutions, with particular attention to fostering digital skills;
11. Tasks relevant OSCE executive structures, including field operations, within their mandates and available resources, to assist participating States upon their requests in implementing the provisions of this decision;
12. Encourages the OSCE Partners for Co-operation to voluntarily implement the provisions of this decision.

Second day of the Twenty-Fifth Meeting
MC(25) Journal No. 2, Agenda item 7

DECISION No. 6/18
**STRENGTHENING EFFORTS TO PREVENT AND COMBAT CHILD
TRAFFICKING, INCLUDING OF UNACCOMPANIED MINORS**

The Ministerial Council,

Gravely alarmed by the prevalence of trafficking in children, including those who are unaccompanied, in all its forms, including for the purpose of sexual exploitation, forced labour, forced criminality, forced marriage, and the removal of organs,

Reaffirming all OSCE commitments to combat child trafficking, contained in, in particular, Ministerial Council Decision No. 13/04 on the special needs for child victims of trafficking for protection and assistance; Ministerial Council Decision No. 15/06 on combating sexual exploitation of children; Ministerial Council Decisions No. 6/17 on strengthening efforts to prevent trafficking in human beings and No. 7/17 on strengthening efforts to combat all forms of child trafficking, including for sexual exploitation, as well as other forms of sexual exploitation of children; and also the OSCE Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings (2003) and its 2005 and 2013 Addenda,

Noting the relevant provisions of pertinent international instruments, including the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and the UN Optional Protocol to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution, and Child Pornography; the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its supplementing Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children; and the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182) of the International Labour Organization (ILO),

Deeply concerned about the large number of unaccompanied children who are vulnerable to human trafficking in recent years,

Acknowledging that the adoption of a victim-centred and trauma-informed approach that takes into account the respective gender-specific concerns of girls and boys and the best interests of the child, is paramount to effectively prevent and protect children from being subjected to trafficking in human beings,

Recognizing that collaboration among States, first line responders and civil society, can further help safeguard children, including those who are unaccompanied, from being subjected to human trafficking,

Recalling that in Ministerial Council Decision No. 7/17, the participating States expressed concern about the vulnerability of unaccompanied minors to human trafficking and encouraged participating States to raise public awareness of the vulnerabilities of children in migration flows, to all forms of child trafficking, and to increase the capacity and broaden the scope of first line responders to identify child victims of trafficking and provide such children with protection, as well as with appropriate assistance, effective remedies and other services as applicable under domestic law,

Commending participating States that adopt special legislative and other measures for the early identification, reception and protection of children vulnerable to human trafficking, including unaccompanied minors,

Recognizing the importance of the contribution of civil society, including religious organizations, in *inter alia* assisting the work of national authorities in preventing and combating all forms of child trafficking, through national anti-trafficking mechanisms, including National Referral Mechanisms, as appropriate,

Noting the 17th Alliance against Trafficking in Persons conference on “Trafficking in Children and the Best Interests of the Child” (2017) and the first OSCE Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting on “Child Trafficking: From Prevention to Protection” (2018),

Calls on the participating States to:

1. Adopt relevant measures so that all child victims of human trafficking are treated in line with the principle of non-discrimination, and in accordance with their individual needs and taking into account their best interests, providing opportunities for them to be heard, as appropriate, and upholding and protecting their human rights;
2. Adopt a victim-centred and trauma-informed approach that takes into account the respective gender-specific concerns of girls and boys and the best interests of the child, and fully respects the human rights and fundamental freedoms of children subjected to human trafficking;
3. Provide, as relevant, government service providers and agencies that come into contact with children with adequate guidance and training on how to properly identify, report, assist, and protect child victims of trafficking in an age-appropriate and manner that takes into account the respective gender-specific concerns of girls and boys, and consider the provision of relevant training to private sector actors that come into contact with child victims of trafficking;
4. Take measures to provide child victims of trafficking, when necessary, with a qualified and trained guardian or equivalent and/or a legal representative as a matter of priority, in order to safeguard the interests of child victims of trafficking, including those who are unaccompanied, and that their guardians and/or legal representatives are involved in procedures concerning their assistance and in finding durable and sustainable solutions for them;
5. Address the situation of child victims of trafficking, including those unaccompanied, within a child protection framework;

6. Promote national anti-trafficking mechanisms, including National Referral Mechanisms where they exist, and child protection systems where appropriate, that recognize the needs and rights of child victims of trafficking; incorporate victim-centred, trauma-informed and age-appropriate assistance; apply a multidisciplinary approach, respecting human rights, that takes into account the respective gender-specific concerns of girls and boys, and reflects, as appropriate, input and recommendations from survivors of human trafficking when providing immediate assistance and looking for durable and sustainable solutions; as well as establish referral channels that are appropriate for children;
7. Provide that, to the extent possible, any assessment of the needs of a child victim of trafficking takes into account his or her interests and views and the need for care, protection and safety;
8. Upon identification of a child as a victim of trafficking, or when there are reasonable grounds to believe that a child may have been subjected to trafficking, take appropriate action to keep the child safe, in particular by preventing sexual and other abuse, preventing re-victimization, in accordance with national laws, provide for the possibility of not imposing penalties on victims for their involvement in unlawful activities, to the extent that they have been compelled to do so, and by providing suitable rehabilitation, reintegration and/or repatriation programmes, where appropriate;
9. Encourage law enforcement, or other relevant authorities, as appropriate, to co-operate with one another by collecting and exchanging information, in accordance with their respective domestic laws, including concerning the protection of personal data, about child victims of trafficking and those at risk of being subjected to human trafficking, for the purpose of strengthening their protection and addressing the issue of missing children;
10. Strengthen national, regional and international co-operation for preventing and combating child trafficking, particularly with regard to reporting and sharing information, about child victims of trafficking, including those unaccompanied, in accordance their respective domestic laws, including concerning the protection of personal data;
11. Consider the appointment of a national focal point to whom enquiries can be addressed by officials from other countries regarding child victims of trafficking, including those who went missing and/or whom they plan to return to in their respective country of origin;
12. Promote efforts to prevent child trafficking, countering the culture of impunity, and reducing and addressing the demand which fosters all forms of exploitation;
13. Task the relevant OSCE executive structures, in accordance with their mandates, within available resources and in co-ordination with the OSCE Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings, to continue assisting participating States, upon their request, in addressing all forms of child trafficking, by *inter alia* maximizing the existing knowledge basis and ensuring at the same time that no duplication of efforts and funded programmes occurs.

MC.DEC/6/18
7 December 2018
Attachment

Original: ENGLISH

**INTERPRETATIVE STATEMENT UNDER
PARAGRAPH IV.1(A)6 OF THE RULES OF PROCEDURE
OF THE ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY AND
CO-OPERATION IN EUROPE**

By the delegation of the Holy See:

“Mr. Chairperson,

The Holy See, while joining the consensus on the Ministerial Council decision on strengthening efforts to prevent and combat child trafficking, including of unaccompanied minors, wishes to make the following interpretative statement, under paragraph IV.1(A)6 of the OSCE Rules of Procedure.

The family has a completely original, indispensable and irreplaceable role in raising children. Parents, in particular, have the primary responsibilities, rights and duties for rearing and guiding their children.

Therefore, the Holy See, reaffirming the importance of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, deems – in the light of the rights of the child and of those of his or her parents and family, enshrined in the above-mentioned Convention – that any assessment of the needs of a child, and any appropriate action to keep the child safe, cannot occur without respecting the primary and inalienable rights of the parents.

Appropriate arrangements and measures should be put in place to ensure that the principle of the best interests of the child and the role of the family, as the fundamental group of society concerned with the protection and well-being of children and adolescents, are a primary consideration in regard to all decisions having a fundamental impact on the life of a child.

We request that this interpretative statement be attached to the decision and annexed to the journal of the meeting under this item.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.”