



**PERMANENT REPRESENTATION OF PORTUGAL
TO THE OSCE**

1028th Plenary Meeting of the Forum for Security Co-operation

9 November 2022

Security Dialogue “Code of Conduct Annual Discussion revisited”

Statement by Portugal

Mr. Chair,

Thank you for organizing this Security Dialogue and the speakers for their interesting presentations. In addition to the EU statement, I would like to underline some points in my national capacity.

Mr. Chair,

The Code of Conduct is a key normative document in OSCE’s politico-military domain and by the time it was agreed in the 90’s its provisions were ground-breaking. The Code was of high relevance when it was crafted. Today that relevance is even higher.

In the context of the ongoing Russia’s war of aggression against Ukraine, we witness deplorable systematic and deliberated breaches of the Code’s norms, both in its interstate and intrastate aspects. In this vein, we value and support the three topics of discussion under the Code’s umbrella put forward in the concept note and directly connected with the invasion of Ukraine by Russia.

As women have been particularly affected by the current conflict, namely with the appalling increase in gender-based and sexual violence, the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Agenda remains more important than ever. In face of the countless atrocities reported, it remains essential to ensure the respect of International Humanitarian Law and International Human Rights Law, including with view to hold accountable those responsible for violations and abuses of such obligations. As the second Moscow Mechanism Report notes: “any violations of international law, including IHL and IHRL, by the *de jure*



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or *de facto* organs of the State as well as by private entities whose acts are attributable to the State, give rise to the international responsibility of this State.” With regard to Private Military and Security Companies (PMSC), let us recall the importance of ensuring the accountability of such companies and the efforts carried out under the Montreux Document and its Working Groups in that context.

Mr. Chair,

While our common principles and commitments face an unprecedented attack, it is also important to stress how relevant they still are. Despite the current grim situation, we not only continue to believe in the value of OSCE and its *acquis*, but also think that these invaluable documents can be of interest to other geographies too. The Code of Conduct is such a case, and it has even been called an “export product”.

We welcome the outreach initiatives undertaken in the past to promote the Code of Conduct beyond OSCE borders and we would like to further contribute to them by providing an official Portuguese translation of the Code, which will be made accessible online. We are confident that this version will allow not only an internal broader dissemination of that document but also will make it more easily available to relevant audiences in the Portuguese-speaking countries in different continents. It can also be a relevant resource in the realm of technical-military cooperation.

We hope that non-OSCE States can also draw benefit and inspiration from the Code. But, more importantly, we urge the ones who voluntarily committed to it to fully abide by its norms.

Thank you.