



**Statement by
H. E. Witold Waszczykowski, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland
23rd Meeting of the OSCE Ministerial Council
(Hamburg, 8 December 2016)**

1. Today's meeting takes place in an extremely complex, unpredictable and challenging security environment. Situation has further deteriorated since our meeting last year in Belgrade.
2. I believe **the OSCE can make a genuine contribution** in minimizing threats, fostering reconciliation and conflict resolution as well as promoting a secure, safe and stable environment. There is one **basic condition though: all participating States have to play by the rules.**
3. Let me start with our continued concern about the **volatile and unpredictable situation on the ground in Donbas** as well as **the continued occupation and illegal annexation of Crimea**. Initial positive achievements – such as an attempt to separate forces in designated pilot areas – are constantly being overshadowed by a deterioration of the situation along the contact line.
4. We appreciate the **important work of the SMM and its leadership and the efforts of the Trilateral Contact Group**. Poland fully supports a timely extension of the SMM's mandate. Poland would also support strengthened international security presence in Donbas, including a potential police mission.
5. We should not turn a blind eye to other conflicts in the OSCE area. **We have to reaffirm our commitment to solving protracted conflicts persisting in the regions of Nagorno-Karabakh, Moldova and Georgia**. Unsettled disputes may easily escalate into military action. The credibility and impact of the OSCE will be reflected by the political will and effort we take to make a meaningful contribution to regional stability.
6. We need **a peaceful resolution of the conflict in Georgia – with respect to the country's sovereignty and integrity within its internationally recognized borders**. We support the Geneva International Discussions, including the need for a real progress on the core issues discussed, as well as for increasing OSCE's role in facilitating a peaceful solution to the conflict.

7. In my view, the **political-military commitments within the OSCE should become more prominent again in our deliberations.** The last few years clearly indicated that conventional conflicts, use of force or a threat to use it well as hybrid warfare are not bygones. Discussions in this regard should be better structured, while respecting and fully implementing the existing commitments, especially the Vienna Document, the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE Treaty) as well as the Treaty on Open Skies.
8. **As a first stage of such a ‘structured dialogue’ at the OSCE we should go through an analytical phase.** Discussions on threat perceptions, military postures and doctrines or military activities may also be perceived as a confidence building measure. We need such a dialogue to properly assess what are the risks and challenges facing us before we consider any further steps.
9. **We feel an urgent need to continue the process of modernization of the Vienna Document, in particular the Risk Reduction Chapter.** In this regard, I wish to highlight **the joint proposal of 16 participating States initiated by Poland on strengthening paragraph 17 of the Vienna Document concerning the cooperation on hazardous incidents of a military nature.** We underline the mutually beneficial and non-politicized character of this proposal, which is responsive to the frequent challenges generated by increased military activities.
10. **Poland attaches utmost importance to the strengthening of the OSCE human dimension as a key component of the OSCE comprehensive concept of security.** We strongly support all OSCE autonomous institutions – Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities and the Representative on Freedom of the Media – as they are the guardians of our human rights commitments. Poland is very proud to be the host country of ODIHR, which celebrated its 25th anniversary this year, and the annual, widely-recognized Human Dimension Implementation Meeting.
11. Let me thank once again the German Chairmanship for their efforts in 2016. I extend my best wishes to the incoming Austrian Chairmanship and congratulate Italy for their successful bid for the post in 2018.