



Ministry
of Foreign Affairs
Republic of Poland

Statement by H.E. Bartosz Cichocki

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*Mr. Chairman,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,*

I wish to thank the Austrian Chairmanship for hosting the Ministerial Council in Vienna. We appreciate your efforts in chairing the Organization, including by successfully selecting right candidates for the top positions at the OSCE.

Obviously, helping to solve the conflict provoked by the Russian aggression on Ukraine remains the key issue for the Organization. I have no doubt that this pivotal endeavour will determine the future of the OSCE. Some initial positive achievements – such as an attempt to separate forces in designated pilot areas – are constantly being overshadowed by the deteriorating security situation along the contact line.

In this context, the role of the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission – which remains the “eyes and ears” of the international community on the ground – cannot pass unnoticed. Poland, being the 4th biggest contributor to the mission, will continue to support the SMM. We should not only reform and further enhance this mission, but also allow it to fully execute its mandate. Let me be clear here – all attacks by the Russia-backed militants on the SMM and its monitors must stop immediately.

Poland has been a long-standing advocate of the enhanced international presence in Donbas. However, we have to bear in mind that a potential UN mission cannot be treated as a silver bullet solution. It should definitely not replace the Special Monitoring Mission on the ground. Poland is ready and willing to help find a balanced solution in this regard, especially as we will become a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council in less than a month.

I would like to be understood correctly – Donbas and Crimea are a number one challenge, but we should not turn a blind eye on other conflicts in the OSCE area. Therefore, we have to reaffirm our full commitment to solving protracted conflicts in Nagorno-Karabakh, Moldova and Georgia. With regard to the latter, we believe that the OSCE should play a more significant role in conflict resolution. On Moldova, we have recently learned that a crucial bridge was reopened after 25 years, linking both sides of the Dniester river. This is a concrete accomplishment of the 5+2 format.

We should also not lose sight of our principal need: that of the full compliance with and unconditional implementation of existing commitments in all three dimensions, including confidence and security building measures and arms control agreements.

That is why we have been calling for the modernization of the Vienna Document. Concrete proposals are on the table, including on such uncontroversial topics as risk reduction. I remain convinced that our military experts see value in minimizing risk by updating paragraph 17 of the Vienna Document or increasing reciprocal transparency with voluntary reporting on military exercises in the Forum for Security Cooperation. The Structured Dialogue process also offers a number of possible solutions in this regard and could potentially serve as a confidence building measure.

Let me also underline that we remain concerned about the ongoing violation of the Treaty on Open Skies by Russia, which remains one of the bedrocks of the political-military dimension.

Finally, let me express our strong support for the activities undertaken by all OSCE's autonomous institutions and actors. In their essential role of watchdogs, they examine the level of implementation of commitments undertaken by the participating states. I am pleased that Warsaw – through hosting the ODIHR, the Human Dimension Implementation Meeting and the Human Dimension Seminar – has firmly established itself as a European hub for dialogue on democracy and human rights. In this context, it is my pleasure to announce that the host country agreement, which consolidates ODIHR's legal status in Poland, will soon enter into force.

I would like to thank, once again, the Austrian Chairmanship and I wish to extend my best wishes to the incoming Italian Chairmanship.

Thank you for your attention.