

Chairmanship: Italy

1177th PLENARY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

1. Date: Thursday, 1 March 2018

Opened: 10.05 a.m.
Suspended: 1 p.m.
Resumed: 3.05 p.m.
Closed: 4.30 p.m.

2. Chairperson: Ambassador A. Azzoni

Prior to taking up the agenda, the Chairperson, on behalf of the Permanent Council, offered condolences to the Russian Federation in connection with the terrorist attack in Dagestan on 18 February 2018. The Russian Federation thanked the Chairperson for his expression of sympathy.

The Chairperson, on behalf of the Permanent Council, also offered condolences to Afghanistan (Partner for Co-operation) in connection with the attacks in Kabul, Helmand and Farah on 24 February 2018.

The Chairperson, on behalf of the Permanent Council, furthermore expressed his solidarity with the United States of America in connection with the attack on the US Embassy in Montenegro on 22 February 2018.

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

Agenda item 1: REPORT BY THE HEAD OF THE OSCE MISSION TO MONTENEGRO

Chairperson, Head of the OSCE Mission to Montenegro (PC.FR/5/18 OSCE+), Bulgaria-European Union (with the candidate countries Albania, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia; the country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate country Bosnia and Herzegovina; the European Free Trade Association countries Iceland and Liechtenstein, members of the European Economic Area; as well as Moldova and San Marino, in alignment) (PC.DEL/217/18/Rev.1), Russian Federation (PC.DEL/207/18), Norway (PC.DEL/224/18), Turkey

(PC.DEL/201/18 OSCE+), United States of America (PC.DEL/228/18),
Albania (PC.DEL/206/18 OSCE+), Montenegro

Agenda item 2: REPORT BY THE CO-ORDINATOR OF OSCE ECONOMIC
AND ENVIRONMENTAL ACTIVITIES

Chairperson, Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities (SEC.GAL/31/18 OSCE+), Bulgaria-European Union (with the candidate countries Albania, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia; the country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate country Bosnia and Herzegovina; the European Free Trade Association countries Iceland and Liechtenstein, members of the European Economic Area; as well as Andorra, Georgia, Moldova and San Marino, in alignment) (PC.DEL/220/18), Kazakhstan (PC.DEL/198/18 OSCE+), Switzerland (PC.DEL/215/18 OSCE+), Turkey (PC.DEL/202/18 OSCE+), United States of America (PC.DEL/195/18), Russian Federation (PC.DEL/196/18), Belarus (PC.DEL/225/18 OSCE+), Armenia, Serbia, Albania

Agenda item 3: REVIEW OF CURRENT ISSUES

Chairperson

- (a) *Russia's ongoing aggression against Ukraine:* Ukraine (PC.DEL/204/18), Bulgaria-European Union (with the candidate countries Albania, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Montenegro; the country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate country Bosnia and Herzegovina; the European Free Trade Association countries Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway, members of the European Economic Area; as well as Georgia and Moldova, in alignment) (PC.DEL/221/18), Switzerland (PC.DEL/216/18 OSCE+), Turkey (PC.DEL/230/18 OSCE+), United States of America (PC.DEL/212/18), Canada (PC.DEL/226/18 OSCE+)
- (b) *Situation in Ukraine and the need to implement the Minsk agreements:* Russian Federation (PC.DEL/197/18)
- (c) *Four years of illegal occupation of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol by the Russian Federation:* Ukraine (PC.DEL/205/18), Bulgaria-European Union (with the candidate countries Albania, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Montenegro; the country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate country Bosnia and Herzegovina; the European Free Trade Association countries Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway, members of the European Economic Area; as well as Andorra, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine, in alignment) (PC.DEL/222/18), United States of America (PC.DEL/199/18), Canada (PC.DEL/227/18 OSCE+), Switzerland (PC.DEL/218/18 OSCE+), Turkey (PC.DEL/229/18 OSCE+)
- (d) *Four years since the reunification of Crimea with the Russian Federation:* Russian Federation, Ukraine, Bulgaria-European Union

- (e) *Murder of journalist Mr. J. Kuciak in Slovakia*: Slovakia (Annex 1), Chairperson, United States of America (also on behalf of Canada) (PC.DEL/211/18), Switzerland (PC.DEL/219/18 OSCE+), Bulgaria-European Union, Malta (Annex 2)
- (f) *Death of the Georgian citizen Mr. A. Tatumashvili detained by the Russian occupation regime*: Georgia (PC.DEL/203/18 OSCE+), Bulgaria-European Union (with the candidate countries Albania, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Montenegro; the country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate country Bosnia and Herzegovina; the European Free Trade Association countries Iceland and Norway, members of the European Economic Area; as well as Andorra, Moldova and Ukraine, in alignment) (PC.DEL/223/18), United States of America (PC.DEL/210/18), Moldova, Russian Federation (PC.DEL/208/18)

Agenda item 4: REPORT ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE
 CHAIRMANSHIP-IN-OFFICE

- (a) *Visit of the Special Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office for the Transdniestrian Settlement Process to Moldova from 19 to 22 February 2018*: Chairperson
- (b) *Participation of the Chairperson of the Permanent Council in the meeting of the OSCE-Council of Europe Co-ordination Group to be held in Strasbourg, France, on 23 March 2018*: Chairperson
- (c) *Participation of the Italian OSCE Chairmanship Co-ordinator in a meeting with the Council of Europe to be held in Strasbourg, France, on 9 May 2018*: Chairperson
- (d) *Meeting of the Informal Group of Friends on Youth and Security, to be held on 2 March 2018 (PC.GAL/23/18 OSCE+) and introduction of the Special Representatives of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office on Youth and Security*: Chairperson
- (e) *OSCE-wide Counter-Terrorism Conference, to be held in Rome on 8 and 9 May 2018*: Chairperson
- (f) *Second Preparatory Meeting of the 26th Economic and Environmental Forum, to be held in Venice, Italy, on 24 and 25 May 2018*: Chairperson

Agenda item 5: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY GENERAL

- (a) *Announcement of the distribution of a written report of the Secretary General (SEC.GAL/34/18 OSCE+)*: Director of the Office of the Secretary General
- (b) *Participation of the Secretary General in the Winter Meeting of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, held on 22 and 23 February 2018*: Director of the Office of the Secretary General (SEC.GAL/34/18 OSCE+)

- (c) *Visit of the Secretary General to Bosnia and Herzegovina on 20 and 21 February 2018*: Director of the Office of the Secretary General (SEC.GAL/34/18 OSCE+)
- (d) *Participation of the Secretary General in the Munich Security Conference, held from 16 to 18 February 2018*: Director of the Office of the Secretary General (SEC.GAL/34/18 OSCE+)
- (e) *Meeting of the Secretary General with the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan on 15 February 2018*: Director of the Office of the Secretary General (SEC.GAL/34/18 OSCE+)
- (f) *Meeting of the Secretary General with the UN Assistant Secretary-General for Rule of Law and Security Institutions in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations on 15 February 2018*: Director of the Office of the Secretary General (SEC.GAL/34/18 OSCE+)
- (g) *Address of the OSCE Special Representative for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings at the meeting of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly Ad Hoc Committee on Migration on 23 February 2018*: Director of the Office of the Secretary General (SEC.GAL/34/18 OSCE+)
- (h) *Participation of the OSCE Special Representative for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings in a second expert meeting on trafficking in human beings for terrorist activities, held in London on 16 February 2018*: Director of the Office of the Secretary General (SEC.GAL/34/18 OSCE+)
- (i) *Appointments of senior positions in the OSCE Secretariat*: Director of the Office of the Secretary General (SEC.GAL/34/18 OSCE+)

Agenda item 6: ANY OTHER BUSINESS

2018 Defender of Democracy Award: Netherlands (also on behalf of Canada, Denmark, Montenegro, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and the United States of America) (PC.DEL/200/18 OSCE+), Serbia

4. Next meeting:

Thursday, 8 March 2018, at 10 a.m., in the Neuer Saal



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

PC.JOUR/1177

1 March 2018

Annex 1

Original: ENGLISH

1177th Plenary Meeting

PC Journal No. 1177, Agenda item 3(e)

STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF SLOVAKIA

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

We are extremely saddened to announce that on Sunday, 25 February, the 27-year-old Slovak investigative journalist Mr. Ján Kuciak and his fiancée Ms. Martina Kušnírová were found dead in their house, having been killed in an unprecedented attack that has shocked our country.

Slovakia has never faced such an attack on a journalist during its existence.

All political representatives of the Slovak Republic have condemned this hideous act and have called for a speedy investigation of the crime.

Prime Minister Robert Fico said that the murder of the two young people was an “abominable crime and must not have a place in our society. If it is proven that the death of the investigative reporter was connected with his journalistic work, it would constitute an unprecedented attack on freedom of speech and democracy in Slovakia. All Slovak governments have respected the media’s role in our society and have viewed the freedom of the media as an irreplaceable part of a democratic society. That Slovakia has constantly been in the top positions of the respected Press Freedom Index, which was set up by the organization Reporters Without Borders, attests to this. Last year Slovakia ranked 17th out of 180 countries.”

The Slovak Government stands ready to give maximum support to the law enforcement authorities. A special investigation team has already been established, comprising officials from the General Prosecutor’s Office, the Special Prosecutor’s Office, the Ministry of the Interior, and the Slovak intelligence agency.

Slovakia’s leaders have promised to bring the perpetrators to justice, with the Government offering a one-million-euro reward for information leading to an arrest.

Slovak society has voiced an outcry against these heinous murders, as demonstrated by several spontaneous memorial events that have already taken place across the country.

We deeply mourn the loss of the lives of two innocent young people. Our hearts are with the families, friends and colleagues of Mr. Ján Kuciak and his partner and we offer them our deepest condolences.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.



1177th Plenary Meeting

PC Journal No. 1177, Agenda item 3(e)

STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF MALTA

Mr. Chairperson,

At the outset, we would also like to express our solidarity, not only with the family and friends of the Slovak journalist Mr. Ján Kuciak and his partner Ms. Martina Kušnírová, but also with all the citizens of Slovakia as they go through this difficult period.

This appears to be another attack on freedom of the media and freedom of speech in Europe.

The case of this Slovak journalist and his partner did not just revive our horrific memories of the tragic killing of the Maltese journalist Ms. Daphne Caruana Galizia last year, but also reinforces our conviction of the importance of uniting together, more than ever before, to safeguard our freedom of speech and the media in the OSCE region and beyond.

Malta aligns itself with the comments made by the EU ambassador but I wish to avail myself of this opportunity to make some additional remarks.

Mr. Chairperson,

Allow me the opportunity to brief the Permanent Council once again – indeed this is the third time – about the recent developments pertaining to the case of the murdered Maltese journalist, Ms. Daphne Caruana Galizia.

As I announced at the Permanent Council last December, ten persons were arrested on reasonable suspicions in connection with being involved in the murder of the Maltese journalist. Since then three persons have been arraigned in court over this murder, and following the compilation of evidence, the Magistrate ruled that the police had gathered sufficient prima facie evidence against them. The hearing of their case started on 1 February this year.

Meanwhile, the other persons have been released on police bail while the investigation continues.

Mr. Chairperson,

We are waiting for all the due procedures to take their course in the knowledge that justice will be served, not only for the victim and her family but also for Maltese society.

Our Government's commitment to bring the perpetrators of this heinous murder to justice, thanks also to the important assistance received by foreign investigative bodies to whom we reiterate our expression of thanks, proves that the fight against impunity for murders of journalists is not simply another topic of convenience, but rather our strong conviction.

Meanwhile, the draft Media and Defamation Bill, which is endorsed by all the media houses in Malta and also contains most of the recommendations made by international organizations, including the Office of the Representative on Freedom of the Media, is expected to be endorsed by parliament this month. The key changes to the current bill will mark another milestone in the Government's resolve to uphold freedom of the media and freedom of speech, which are so much at the heart of the values of my country and of the OSCE.

By way of conclusion, let me reiterate our readiness and commitment to supporting the Office of the Representative on Freedom of the Media as it strives to ensure that the freedom of speech and the media will continue to be enjoyed by all throughout the OSCE area. I would be pleased to further update the Permanent Council on any developments in the case of Ms. Daphne Caruana Galizia in the future.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.