

## 27th OSCE Ministerial Meeting

### **Statement by the Estonian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Urmas Reinsalu December 3, 2020, OSCE Ministerial Meeting**

Mr. Chairperson-in-Office, Excellences,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me first express my **sympathy and solidarity** with all the people and nations of the world suffering from the coronavirus. I thank the **Albanian** team for hosting our meeting and commend your dedicated Chairmanship in these challenging times.

The **COVID-19 crisis** has demonstrated how crucial **multilateral cooperation** is to our collective health, prosperity and security. We support the adoption of our declaration on COVID-19 at this meeting. It highlights the unprecedented challenge brought up by the pandemic, including to the fulfillment of the OSCE commitments, and we stress that in addressing the health risks we have to abide in line with the norms and principles enshrined in the OSCE documents.

**Freedom, individual liberties, human rights, democracy and the rule of law** are essential prerequisites for peace and prosperity. This year we are

celebrating the **45<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act and the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Paris Charter**. Yet we are still witnessing breaches of fundamental freedoms and deterioration of **human rights** in the OSCE area. The ongoing pandemic proves that **securing independent and open media landscape** is more important than ever. Last year, Estonia joined the **Media Freedom Coalition** and we are going to host the **Global Conference for Media Freedom in 2021**. I hope to welcome many of you in Tallinn then.

The spirit of the European security, expressed in the Helsinki Final Act and the Charter of Paris, rejects all attempts to create or re-create **spheres of influence**, as this will inevitably serve as a cause for conflict. Every state should be free to choose its own security arrangements. Unfortunately, to this day we are witnessing serious violations of OSCE commitments - ongoing **violations of sovereignty and territorial integrity in Europe**. We are also witnessing the lack of conformity with international electoral standards and the systematic violations of human rights.

The OSCE has a unique set of instruments in conflict resolution, confidence building, arms control, human rights protection and democratic governance building. **Confidence building and trust through fulfilling the commitments** is crucial to the stability and transparency in the OSCE region. However, it happens only if all parties fulfil their obligations. The changes and

challenges in the security environment point to the need to adapt the existing instruments. Negotiations on **Vienna Document** modernization have been on the agenda for some time now. As a confidence building measure, the Vienna Document has a significant role in ensuring predictability and transparency. Its proper application and modernization would increase transparency, risk reduction and incidents prevention even further.

Estonia continues to work on emerging threats, such as **cybersecurity**. OSCE has been a global leader among the regional organizations in adopting cybersecurity confidence-building measures. These measures could contribute to the stability of our region in this vastly expanding sector. Estonia remains committed to the global cyberstability framework and its implementation.

The pandemic has clearly highlighted how important it is to have a **safe and reliable digital infrastructure and cyberspace**. Therefore, we must join forces to diminish existing digital gaps between and within societies and that is why Estonia and Singapore launched the **Declaration on Digital Response to COVID-19** this summer. This text is open for everyone to join.

Last, but not least, we must all uphold and value the work of the OSCE's autonomous institutions and field missions. This is why we support and would

welcome the appointment of the new Secretary General and the Heads of the OSCE autonomous institutions at this Ministerial Meeting.

Dear Colleagues, the OSCE principles and tasks have always been priorities of the Estonian foreign and security policy. Estonia has proven to be a trustworthy international partner since our membership in the OSCE from 1991. To affirm our deep commitment to the OSCE our Government has offered to take up the responsibility of the OSCE Chairmanship. With the approval of OSCE Participating states, we would be ready to undertake the Chairmanship already in 2024. We would be ready to cooperate with and listen to every OSCE participating State. I would be looking forward and grateful for a support from all of you.

I extend my best wishes and express our strong support to the incoming **Swedish** Chairmanship and **Poland** as a next member of Troika. We also welcome and support **North-Macedonia** in readiness to lead the OSCE during 2023.

Thank you!