



**ПОСТОЯННОЕ ПРЕДСТАВИТЕЛЬСТВО
РОССИЙСКОЙ ФЕДЕРАЦИИ
ПРИ ОРГАНИЗАЦИИ ПО БЕЗОПАСНОСТИ
И СОТРУДНИЧЕСТВУ В ЕВРОПЕ**

**THE PERMANENT MISSION
OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION
TO THE ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY
AND CO-OPERATION IN EUROPE**

**Remarks by Alexey Polishchuk,
Deputy Director of the Foreign Ministry's
Department of European Cooperation,
at the final session of the 24th OSCE Ministerial Council
Vienna, December 8, 2017**

Mr Chairperson,
Colleagues,
Ladies and gentlemen,

First of all, I would like to express our gratitude to the Austrian Chairmanship of the OSCE and personally Foreign Minister Sebastian Kurz and his team, as well as the Vienna authorities for their hospitality and the successful organisation of this meeting.

The main achievement of this Ministerial Council is the sound discussions we have held on a broad range of European issues. It is this ability rather than the number of decisions adopted that we see as the OSCE's key role as the leading political dialogue forum.

Regrettably, the politically charged position of some countries has again prevented the adoption of important ministerial decisions, including, a common political declaration and statements on the OSCE's efforts to facilitate a settlement of the internal Ukrainian crisis. Moreover, two states have blocked the attempts of the Austrian Chairmanship to adopt a non-confrontational document in support of the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine.

At the same time, discussions on other conflicts in the OSCE's zone of responsibility were more productive. We welcome the statement on Transnistria, which reflects the achievements reached towards a settlement and the resolve to settle the remaining issues. We reaffirmed our initiative for signing a Chisinau-Tiraspol agreement on guarantees for the implementation of the agreements reached.

We welcome the joint statement by the heads of the delegation of the OSCE Minsk Group three co-chair countries on a peaceful settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

Although no document has been adopted on the Geneva discussions on security in the South Caucasus, we believe that the discussions we held at the OSCE Ministerial Council have reaffirmed the importance of the Geneva format of direct talks between Georgia, South Ossetia and Abkhazia and the focus on the achievement of an agreement on the non-use of force between them.

Regrettably, the military-political dimension has fallen victim to confrontational policies. Only one document has been adopted on small arms and light weapons and stockpiles of conventional ammunition. On the other hand, we see the discussions on ways to revitalise an equal and mutually respectful European dialogue on the de-escalation of tension as a major outcome of the Ministerial Council. For our part, we would like to point out the

illogical and counterproductive nature of any attempt to push through decisions on the modernisation of the OSCE's military-political tools. This is not up for discussion until NATO changes its policy of containment towards Russia. At the same time, we are willing to take part in the Structured Dialogue and hope that it will be depoliticised as much as possible.

It is important that a serious discussion on joint resistance to transnational threats has been held during this Ministerial Council. Building up counterterrorism cooperation is especially important now in light of an unprecedented wave of terrorism in Europe. We regret that no documents have been coordinated on countering terrorist ideology and propaganda or on extremism and radicalisation. We believe that the council decision on systematic work in the field of information and communication technologies will help form a responsible attitude among the participating states towards cooperation and renunciation of unsubstantiated allegations of involvement in cyberattacks.

Our work on economic issues has helped us coordinate a decision on the broader participation of women and young people in economic processes and on encouraging private enterprise. On the other hand, it is regrettable that some countries are unwilling to reflect the issue of integration alignment in council decisions. We expect this issue to remain on the OSCE agenda. We would like to draw your attention to the joint statement of the EAEU states on connectivity and alignment of integration processes, which was submitted to the OSCE. It is regrettable that a decision on reducing the environmental risks of economic activity has not been adopted.

Although no decisions on the "integration of integrations" have been adopted, we have taken note of the growing dialogue between organisations and associations at the OSCE platform attended by the heads and representatives of the CSTO and NATO and of the EAEU and the EU, including on the sidelines of this Ministerial Council meeting.

Discussions at the meeting have shown that the human dimension is still being seriously affected by distortions and politicisation. Russia proposed that the Ministerial Council consider a draft proposal on optimising the OSCE's humanitarian events. We regret that this proposal has not received a consensus. Still, we hope that discussions on this issue will continue.

We welcome the decisions on combating human trafficking and on protecting children from trafficking and sexual abuse. At the same time, the issues of infringements on freedom of the media in some OSCE countries and attempts to rewrite history have not been reflected in the ministerial documents. We point out the CIS statement on preventing and precluding the destruction and desecration of monuments and other items commemorating the courage and heroism of those who fell fighting Nazism and Fascism during WWII. We expect the OSCE to address this issue.

The unconstructive stand taken by some countries has again prevented us from implementing the decision of the Ministerial Council in Basel in 2014 on adopting declarations in defence of Christians and Muslims. We urge the Italian Chairmanship to work towards settling this issue next year. An event on the safety of Christians, which Russia and Hungary have organised on the sidelines of this meeting, focused on the importance of this issue and the numerous threats facing Christian communities in the Middle East and Europe.

In conclusion, I would like to thank our Austrian colleagues for their honest efforts to formulate a balanced 2017 OSCE agenda in the interests of all member states, as well as for their most constructive approach towards reaching consensus at the Ministerial Council.

We hope that Italy will take over this positive work next year and wish it good luck in its efforts.

Thank you. I request that this statement be added to the book of minutes.