



**Statement by Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Ambassador Burak Akçapar  
30<sup>th</sup> OSCE Ministerial Council  
(30 November 2023)**

Thank you Chair, thank you Minister Osmani, also for your very warm hospitality in Skopje.

Allow me to thank you and North Macedonia for shouldering OSCE chairmanship this year and commend you for your very hard work.

Let me also commend Secretary General Schmid and four top leaders of this Organization, and the staff. We look forward to continue to work with you in the time ahead.

Türkiye appreciates and congratulates Malta for stepping forward as Chair for 2024.

We are meeting once again under extraordinary circumstances for international peace and security.

The tragic war in Ukraine has been continuing, for soon to be two years now.

The devastation, destruction and human suffering in Ukraine have been immense.

The war's regional and global fallout is also on the rise.

We have all been negatively affected by this war.

Let me reaffirm, once again, our principled position in support of Ukraine's territorial integrity and sovereignty; as well as our commitment to upholding dialogue and diplomacy for a political settlement.

Since we last met in reinforced format in late September, we have been witnessing an immense devastation, destruction and human suffering in another part of the world, not too far away from the OSCE region.

Unfortunately, on and after 7th of October, we have been shaken to the core because of the massive loss of civilian lives. After an initial high-ground, Israel has been indiscriminately targeting and heavily attacking civilians and all kinds of civilian infrastructure, including hospitals in Gaza.

Humanity has not seen such a massive loss of civilian lives, mostly women and children, in such a short period of time in recent history. The United Nations itself has never lost such a huge number of civilian personnel in an armed conflict.

As North Macedonia Chair's motto says, "It is about people". Yes, it should be. Not just my kind of people but all kind of people.



Excellencies, Dear Colleagues,

It is not an overstatement to say that the OSCE has been going through the most challenging period in its history.

There have been difficult times in the past as well, times when it was not easy to take decisions.

However, it never got to the situation as it is the case now.

Yet, the Organization remains important as the most inclusive platform for comprehensive security and cooperation in Europe.

This platform, as is, needs to be preserved.

If we cannot pull the organization out of the difficult state it is in, then what hope can we entertain for cooperative security anywhere, any time? Europe, from Atlantic to the Urals, would be locked into confrontation, even conflict. No transparency, no arms control, no confidence and security. It is time for reflection and action.

Reform should be part and parcel of our work.

I believe the old but very relevant concept of cooperative security which underwrote the post-Cold War security architecture and discourse in Europe, should be given a fresh opportunity in 2024 and 2025.

If there was no OSCE today, we would not be able to create it. It is such a unique and valuable construct. It is against this background that my country, Türkiye would ask fellow participating States to seek consensus, but also compromise and vision to strengthen this organization and open a new chapter for cooperative security in Europe.

To facilitate debate, we will devote attention to this topic in the context of the upcoming Antalya Diplomacy Forum in March, in the very forum which brought Ukraine and Russia together for the first time in 2022 after the beginning of the war.

Thank you for your attention.

