

The OSCE Secretariat bears no responsibility for the content of this document and circulates it without altering its content. The distribution by OSCE Conference Services of this document is without prejudice to OSCE decisions, as set out in documents agreed by OSCE participating States.

PC.DEL/387/23  
23 March 2023

ENGLISH  
Original: ITALIAN

Delegation of Italy

**STATEMENT BY  
MR. MASSIMO DREI, DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE  
OF ITALY, AT THE 1416th MEETING OF THE  
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

23 March 2023

**On NATO's response to the humanitarian crisis in Kosovo**

Mr. Chairperson,

NATO's intervention in Kosovo 24 years ago had the clear and limited humanitarian objective of aiding the civilian population and followed repeated attempts by the international community, to which Italy made a strong and determined contribution, to find a diplomatic solution to the conflict and put an end to the violence.

We firmly reject any comparison between the motivations for NATO's intervention in 1999 and the Russian war of aggression – unprovoked, unjustified and unjustifiable – that the Russian Federation has been waging for over a year against Ukraine and its civilian population. This is an expression of the same violent nationalism as the Milošević regime a quarter of a century ago.

Mr. Chairperson,

Respect for and the defence of democracy, the rule of law and human rights are a pillar of our security that must be protected and safeguarded as the only guarantee of peace and prosperity in Europe.

Consistent with this approach, Italy is today at the forefront of efforts to consolidate Kosovo's democratic institutions, uphold the rule of law, fully respect fundamental rights and protect the civil and political rights of all its citizens, including those belonging to minorities.

Italy remains firmly convinced that the main road to the permanent stabilization of the Western Balkans is through a credible European integration process for all countries in the area and is committed – as demonstrated by Minister Tajani's intense diplomatic efforts in the region – to ensuring that this process can move forward with renewed impetus.

For this prospect to materialize, the tragedies of the past must be put behind us once and for all. The agreement reached between Serbia and Kosovo facilitated by the European Union in Ohrid last week presents an important opportunity to move forward in this direction. Italy urges both parties to fully and

unconditionally implement all the points agreed upon in the proposed basic agreement and its annex. Italy will not fail to lend its firm support to both parties along this path.

Thank you.