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CLOSING REMARKS

Minister of Foreign and European Affairs

Miroslav Lajčák

2018 OSCE Ministerial Council

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Milan | Italy

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Dear Foreign Minister Moavero Milanese, Dear Secretary-General Gremminger, Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

Once again - thank you, Enzo, and your team for your work as Chair 2018.

We are grateful for Italy's **commitment and engagement** and for your **hospitality** during these past **2** days in Milan.

And these were very **valuable** days.

We heard the current state of affairs **assessed**, challenges **defined**, concerns **expressed**.

But we also heard a lot of messages of **ambition, unity** and **positive examples**.

Overall – these **2** days provided a good sense of mood and visions of participating States as we prepare for the year to come.

In **Slovakia**, we are **looking forward** to our Chairmanship.

We have chaired the **Mediterranean Contact Group**, we are at the helm of the **budget negotiations for 2019** and we are ready to responsibly and professionally carry out our **OSCE Chairmanship**.

Over the last couple of months, I have **visited many capitals** and together **with my team**, we have **consulted a majority of participating States**. And once again, we listened carefully to all expectations of the OSCE partners.

We will present Slovak **priorities** for **2019** in detail on **10 January** in **Vienna**. But I can already tell you **what kind of Chairmanship Slovakia wants to be:**

- 1. Useful** – **Bringing** more ease and contribute to **improving every-day lives** of the innocent people stuck in the midst of conflict.
- 2. Ambitious but realistic** – **Minding** the potential of the OSCE, while objectively assessing the realities and challenges we face.
- 3. Promoting dialogue** – **Supporting multilateralism and compromise** while respecting **consensus**.
- 4. Forward-looking** – **Engaging** the **youth** not as our *future*, but rather as our *present*.
- 5. Fair and honest** – **We want to be** a fair partner and honest broker. For **all**. The organization, the participating States, and mostly for **all our people**, especially people affected by conflict. After all, they are the reason why we are all here and why we are doing this work.

To conclude,

I want to thank our partners in **Troika** – it has been an honour to work with Austria and Italy. In this regard, I want to commend **Albania** for formalising their aspiration to hold the OSCE Chairmanship in **2020** - and let's keep in mind that **2021** is closer than we think!

Last but not least – thanks go out to the **Secretary General** Greminger, OSCE **Secretariat**, field **missions** and **institutions**, and to **all of you** –

- for your cooperation and support in our preparation for 2019.

Thank you all.