

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/1497/23
2 November 2023

ENGLISH
Original: ITALIAN

Delegation of Italy

**STATEMENT BY
AMBASSADOR STEFANO BALDI, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF
ITALY TO THE OSCE, AT THE 1448th MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

2 November 2023

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson,

Italy aligns itself with the statement delivered by the European Union and wishes to add some observations in its national capacity.

I reiterate the warm welcome extended to Director Mecacci and would like to thank him and all the staff of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) for their commendable and tireless work in promoting human rights and fundamental freedoms in the OSCE area. The participating States have entrusted the ODIHR and the other OSCE autonomous institutions with the essential task of assisting and supporting the implementation of our common commitments in the human dimension. It is our primary responsibility to protect and strengthen this common heritage by providing the ODIHR with adequate human and financial resources, in the shared conviction that there can be no peace, justice and prosperity without democracy, the rule of law and respect for human rights.

The many tragic conflicts affecting our region or touching its borders cannot leave us indifferent. They require us to act more resolutely to ensure respect for international law, to protect victims and provide them with justice, and to meet the aspirations of individuals and their communities to live in peace, security and prosperity.

It was no more than a month ago that we met in Warsaw, at the initiative of the OSCE Chairmanship of North Macedonia, to discuss together with the numerous civil society organizations and human rights defenders present the critical issues of the moment and possible co-operation in strengthening the promotion and protection of human rights in the OSCE area.

While expressing profound regret that this year again it did not prove possible to achieve the consensus required to organize the Human Dimension Implementation Meeting (HDIM), we wish to recall that the HDIM is an integral part of this Organization's dialogue and co-operation architecture and must be preserved as part of our common heritage.

Mr. Chairperson,

The ODIHR makes an indispensable and irreplaceable contribution to the promotion of human rights, democracy and the rule of law. There are numerous examples of the effective support provided by the ODIHR, under the capable leadership of Director Mecacci, to all participating States both east and west of Vienna in the implementation of their human dimension commitments. I should like to mention a few among many that Italy is particularly proud of having supported.

First of all, the various initiatives in support of civil society organizations and human rights defenders, particularly those living in exile. In particular, training courses, including one on the knowledge and techniques needed to interview victims or witnesses of abuse and human rights violations (trauma-informed interviewing).

The CHANGE project on the promotion of women's rights and women's empowerment, which also received the OSCE Gender Equality Champion award this year.

The various activities on the promotion of tolerance and non-discrimination and the protection of freedom of religion, including, for example, school subsidies on countering anti-Semitism, the forthcoming practical guide on interreligious dialogue and the new guide on anti-Christian hate crimes, for which the consultation process has just begun.

The promotion of international standards in the treatment of prisoners through the new Nelson Mandela Rules curriculum, already used for the training of prison staff in Italy.

In these and other fields, Italy will continue to strongly support the ODIHR's activities and the autonomy of its mandate for the promotion of democracy, the rule of law and human rights in the OSCE area.

Thank you.