



**ROYAL NORWEGIAN
MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

Minister of Foreign Affairs

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STATEMENT TO THE
MINISTERIAL COUNCIL OF THE OSCE

Delivered by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ine Eriksen Søreide,
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CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Mr Chairman, Dear Foreign Minister Lajčák, excellencies and colleagues,

Thank you to Slovakia for hosting us and for a successful chairmanship. I would also like to wish Albania all the success for their upcoming chairmanship and to convey my condolences after the recent earthquake.

I want to make four points today.

First, no European country can rely only on defence and deterrence for its security.

Since 1975, the OSCE has been a place where dialogue could be initiated and pursued. Confidence and security building measures were created in this format. Today, we need them more than ever.

Second, engaging in conflict resolution and preventing new conflicts from breaking out, is an area where the OSCE has a role to play. Having a strong presence in participating States is a way for the organisation to bring added value to the field.

As we speak, 1299 women and men from 44 states are working for the Special Monitoring Mission in Ukraine. Many of them serve along the contact line. Acting as our eyes and ears. Reporting facts, because facts matters.

This is our biggest and most expensive mission. But the alternative, with increased conflict and increased suffering is far worse. Progress at next week's Normandy meeting would indeed matter.

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There are other unresolved conflicts, in Moldova and Nagorno-Karabakh, where OSCE plays a role. In Georgia, the OSCE could play an even bigger role if we, the participating states, allow for it.

Third, the OSCE's comprehensive approach to security is the best possible point of departure for our work.

We should strengthen it further by fully committing to women, peace and security, and to gender equality. This is not a gesture to women. It is a matter of effectively and sustainably preventing and resolving conflicts.

Fourth, preserving the OSCE requires resources.

Sustained zero growth over time is in effect budget cuts. I urge all to get out of the budgetary deadlock. Let us at least avoid depleting OSCE's financial resources to such a degree that fulfilling its role becomes impossible.

Mr. Chairman,

The OSCE toolbox is extensive. It spans from mediation support, monitoring mechanisms, confidence building measures and capacity building, to election support, observer missions and institutions working for national minorities, media freedom, democratic institutions, the rule of law and human rights.

However, it is only effective if the participating states cooperate with the OSCE. Only parties to conflicts can resolve them, or prevent them from arising.

We call for reaffirming the European security architecture, to protect and strengthen the OSCE and to stay true to a comprehensive approach to security.

The OSCE is still very much needed in our region.

Thank you.