



Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

ŁÓDŹ

2022

**Twenty-Ninth Meeting of the
Ministerial Council
1 and 2 December 2022**

**Statements by the Chairman-in-Office of the OSCE,
the President of Poland and delegations**

Reports to the Ministerial Council

Łódź 2022

2 December 2022

Original: ENGLISH

MC29EW30

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
I. STATEMENTS BY THE CHAIRMAN-IN OFFICE OF THE OSCE, THE PRESIDENT OF POLAND AND DELEGATIONS	
Opening statement by the Chairman-in-Office of the OSCE	3
Statement by the President of Poland	8
Statement by the delegation of the Czech Republic	13
Statement by the delegation of Bulgaria.....	15
Statement by the delegation of Croatia (also on behalf of Albania, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Montenegro, the Netherlands, North Macedonia, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Türkiye, the United Kingdom and the United States of America)	17
Statement by the Representative of the European Union	19
Statement by the delegation of the United States of America	22
Statement by the delegation of Finland (also on behalf of Albania, Andorra, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Moldova, Monaco, Montenegro, the Netherlands, North Macedonia, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, San Marino, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Ukraine, the United Kingdom and the United States of America)	24
Statement by the delegation of the Russian Federation	26
Statement by the delegation of Canada (also on behalf of Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Iceland, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Sweden, Ukraine, the United Kingdom and the United States of America)	28
Statement by the delegation of the Russian Federation (also on behalf of Belarus).....	31
Statement by the delegation of Canada.....	33
Statement by the delegation of the Russian Federation	35
Statement by the OSCE Troika.....	36
Closing statement by the Chairman-in-Office of the OSCE.....	39
II. REPORTS TO THE MINISTERIAL COUNCIL	
Report by the OSCE Secretary General to the Twenty-Ninth Meeting of the OSCE Ministerial Council	45

Letter from the Chairperson of the Forum For Security Co-operation to the
Minister of Foreign Affairs of Poland, Chairman of the Twenty-Ninth
Meeting of the Ministerial Council of the OSCE50

**I. STATEMENTS BY THE
CHAIRMAN-IN-OFFICE OF THE OSCE,
THE PRESIDENT OF POLAND AND DELEGATIONS**

**OPENING STATEMENT BY
THE CHAIRMAN-IN-OFFICE OF THE OSCE**
(MC.DEL/1/22 of 1 December 2022)

Distinguished President Duda,
Distinguished Madam President Cederfelt,
Distinguished Ministers,
Madam Secretary General,
Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen,

In the moment when Russia unleashed its military aggression against Ukraine our comfort disappeared.

But I am confident that this awful tear in the fabric of our co-operation, the painful hole ripped in our trust and confidence, can be repaired.

We are living in a time of trial.

The hard won world of multilateralism has been trampled underfoot by unilateral choices and deeds against the multilateral framework we had designed and nurtured for decades.

Those choices put into question what we had known as our world with:

- Its carefully crafted and interconnected treaties,
- And a raft of skilfully worded international law that codifies and describes our highest aspirations for respectful, peaceful co-existence within and beyond the OSCE.

Since 24 February the international community and its institutional networks have been constantly tested.

Tested by an aggressive Russia, supported by an autocratic, subservient regime in Minsk. A Russia following an ill-advised policy of the primacy of power over peace for its own people.

This strategy seems to have failed, as of course it must.

The international community has stood up to the test.

Voting outcomes at the United Nations General Assembly are proof of that failure, as are the decisions of the Human Rights Council, the Council of Europe, several other institutions, and the most recent example – the vote in the European Parliament.

And so, while working in and for the OSCE we must watch our compass, and the beacons that have served us well – those of Helsinki, Paris, and those following – to preserve our orientation and resist the turn toward chaos.

Our response to such disrespect of our rules of behaviour must, and has been, immediate, firm, loud and clear.

Faced with an unprecedented crisis, I and my Chairmanship team have shouldered the responsibility of defending the OSCE's principles and protecting its assets, namely its institutions, activities, projects, and – not least – its achievements.

I could not have chosen any other course.

We were and are guided by the spirit of the Helsinki accords.

Our initiative for a Renewed European Security Dialogue was framed and informed by that wisdom.

However, the gap between our aspirations and the actual state of play grew, reaching a point of no return due to the Russian leadership's imperial ambitions.

Those ambitions did not leave room for negotiation.

The Russian plan was to revert to war. And they did.

And then, when their Blitzkrieg did not work, their aggression became increasingly brutal, cruel, and inhumane, tragically but inevitably leading to the committing of war crimes.

It is our legal but also moral obligation to hold both the perpetrators and the decision makers accountable.

The OSCE leadership, supported by the vast majority of participating States, has responded to the challenge in a responsible and thoughtful way, standing up in defence of our values, our principles, and the Organization itself.

To our credit we have, together, left our comfort zone driven by the imperative to protect humanity.

The OSCE is not a wartime Organization.

Holistic approaches like the comprehensive concept of security, and ideas like arms control and confidence-building must be put on hold when the fundamental principles that support those activities are under existential threat from a war of aggression.

And, of course, consensus-based decision-making is sadly only workable in times of peace.

Our response to the Russian turn towards violence has been based on a few simple considerations:

- Firstly, the broker's role expected from a Chairmanship can only be conducted honestly if it is shaped by one's principles. This means that a perpetrator of violence and their victims cannot be treated equally;

- Secondly, the idea of doing nothing because action might create a risk for the Chairmanship or the Organization must be rejected. The need to act using the available tools is all too evident, however often unfounded accusations of bias and non-compliance with procedures are repeated;
- Thirdly, we chose an approach described as “no business as usual” to ensure that the OSCE focused all of its attention on the most demanding security challenge for decades. But also, to pause, and so preserve as much of the OSCE’s other activities as possible, for the benefit of their stakeholders and the Organization itself.

One might say that the OSCE has failed to prevent this war. And, perhaps it could have done better.

But the gradual erosion of arms control compliance and the ever more disingenuous engagement in confidence-building has been happening for the last ten years at least.

It was one participating State that was slowly degrading the OSCE’s available tools in Ukraine – by dismantling its working methods and questioning its presence in the field.

Signals were sent in an attempt to prevent the war by many. By some well in advance, by many more as the threat of war increased.

And all were rebuffed by one. Once so decided by the aggressor the war could not be stopped.

Some might also be tempted to claim that the Chairmanship has failed to build consensus around the OSCE agendas, the adoption of a budget, or the nomination of the 2024 Chairmanship, to name just a few unresolved issues. If you are so tempted, I would ask you to pause for a moment and consider what sort of consensus could be possibly achieved?

A consensus that ignores the existence of a violent belligerent at the table?

A consensus that subverts the principles that were agreed at the outset, and are enshrined in the founding OSCE documents?

My response to this, our response, is, no.

No, we will not compromise on those things we hold to be important, in order to reach a fraudulent, superficial agreement with those who do not negotiate in good faith.

Rather, we have the courage and the resolve to defend the OSCE’s fundamental principles. And we have the quiet strength to be firm and stick to that choice.

We have often articulated our view that the OSCE will be as strong as participating States want and allow it to be.

It seems that Russia has chosen to pursue its political discourse by directly applying the nineteenth century formula espoused by Clausewitz in the twenty-first century.

Wilfully and dangerously ignoring the horror of two world wars and – to stay with a nineteenth century metaphor – driving a coach and horses through the carefully developed rules for peaceful co-existence agreed upon in the twentieth century.

In this regard, it is astonishing to hear some of the accusations made about Poland's conduct of OSCE affairs in 2022. I would even say, it is outrageous to hear Russia accusing the Chairmanship of “pushing the OSCE into the abyss”, “destroying its foundations”, and breaking its procedural rules.

Rather than disinformation and fake philosophy, let me offer you some facts:

- In February it was Russia that rejected the Renewed European Security Dialogue.
- It was Russia in March that rejected the extension of the mandate of the Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine.
- In May it was Russia that blocked the consensus on holding the Human Dimension Implementation Meeting.
- It was Russia in June that rejected the extension of the mandate of the OSCE Project Co-ordinator in Ukraine.
- It was Russia that blocked the appointment to the 2024 Chairmanship without providing any reason why Estonia might be an unacceptable candidate.
- And finally, over this year Russia has constantly blocked the adoption of the OSCE budget.

What else will be blocked by Russia?

I would respectfully suggest it is not Poland that is the wrecking ball, swinging indiscriminately around the halls of the OSCE.

We are handing over the leadership of an OSCE in a completely different shape from the one it had when it was handed to us on 1 January.

This is not a matter of the Organization's leadership philosophy or priorities, but of Russia's attempts to hold the OSCE hostage.

Let me be clear. We do not support in the long term an OSCE run in the emergency mode we were forced to put in place throughout 2022.

But that there can be no return to “business as it was” is clear.

And the need for the Organization to keep as its primary focus the war in Ukraine, for as long as that appalling tragedy continues, is also for us non-negotiable.

For me there is some small satisfaction, and perhaps some small hope, in the OSCE discussions led by Poland, at which – time and again – States have reiterated their

commitment to the principle of conducting our international relations without ever resorting to the threat or use of force.

The OSCE is still an effective and necessary, if for now limited, forum. I believe it can in the future become again a comprehensive and important institution in the support of peaceful co-existence.

Unfortunately, this seems a rather distant perspective.

Confidence has been burnt to ashes. It is all the more important then, for all participating States to rebuild trust based on firm premises. No matter how long it takes.

Whatever strategies and working programmes we will design for an OSCE of the future, they must have in common a reference to our founding principles.

I make no apology for repeating these to an audience that knows them well. These are security and co-operation.

We must not get tired of repeating that.

Our security and co-operation are based on principles that all of us have agreed upon.

We, the OSCE community of States, are the guardians of those universal values, of commonly accepted rules of conduct, and of the complete rejection of any idea that "might is right".

I ask you all to join me in a determination to discharge the responsibility we each have to our citizens: to be the agents of peace, prosperity, and the defenders of their human rights.

Agents determined to do all we can to ensure civilized peaceful co-existence where the rule of force cannot replace the rule of law.

If we choose to hold on to our values, and to renew our determination to be the agents of peace, then I know we can prevail.

And I know that the OSCE will have a place in preserving and maintaining that future peace.

Thank you.

**STATEMENT BY
THE PRESIDENT OF POLAND**

(MC.DEL/16/22 of 2 December 2022)

Distinguished Madam President,
Distinguished Minister, Chairman of today's meeting,
Distinguished Ministers, representatives of the OSCE participating States,

Thank you very much for your invitation and thank you very much to Minister Zbigniew Rau for his commitment during the one-year-long Polish Chairmanship of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, which is now coming to an end. I know very well how difficult and demanding that time was and still is. May I also express, via you, Minister, my thanks to all the other persons involved in the implementation of this very important task.

I regret that the strenuous efforts made to prevent Russian aggression against Ukraine have not produced the expected results. But in retrospect we know that the decision to invade Ukraine – a free, sovereign, independent State – was made in Moscow, in the Kremlin, and there was nothing in our hands, at our disposal as an OSCE community, as an international community, that could have changed it.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Russia's brutal aggression against Ukraine has dominated the Polish Chairmanship of the OSCE, putting aside all other goals we set ourselves at the start. Unfortunately, for the first time since the end of the Second World War, have we witnessed such a blatant military violation of the principles to which we had all voluntarily subscribed in order to prevent another war in Europe.

Conferences on Security and Co-operation in Europe, convened since the 1970s, were intended to enable us, Europeans, and our partners in the region to engage in dialogue on security, peace and human rights.

In the 1990s, we made a common decision, based on the jointly developed principles of the CSCE, to institutionalize that platform for dialogue and to create the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, which would replace it.

I wish to emphasize that it was a joint decision, taken back then, by the States participating in the Conferences. We developed together the principles governing the sovereign equality of States, the refraining from the use of force, co-operation between States and the peaceful settlement of all disputes. Peace, equality and co-operation are the ideas by which we were supposed to conduct dialogue and act in our region. Today, we can clearly see that unfortunately one of the participating States, Russia, has brutally violated all these principles. And there is no doubt that today it is a criminal State whose policy cannot – and I stress, cannot – be agreed with, and whose words cannot be believed.

Although ten months have passed since the start of the Russian aggression, I still cannot overcome the feeling of shock and anger looking at these principles now and juxtaposing them with the events that are unfolding in Ukraine as we speak. What I am

alluding to is the planned and consistent destruction of critical civilian infrastructure by the Russian army aimed at causing a humanitarian disaster.

I know that after the Russian crimes committed in Irpin and Bucha, after the initial shock caused by the information about these horrendous events, the world and all of us are unfortunately beginning to get used to similar news. Ladies and gentlemen, we must not allow this to happen, either with respect to ourselves or to anyone else. We must not get used to it. We cannot move past the planned murder of civilians or the abduction of Ukrainian children, who are subsequently deported deep into Russia. We cannot allow any State in the world to conduct its demographic policy in such a way. For, as a matter of fact, children are abducted in order to improve the demographic situation in Russia, to save Russia from a future demographic disaster. In order to Russify these children – turn them into Russians in the future. We know this also from our history. Unfortunately, this is the way Russia treated other nations for decades or perhaps even for centuries.

I fear that when we start treating Russian bestialities as something normal, it will be equivalent to the victory of the idea of the “*Ruskiy mir*”, meaning brutality, aggression, war, poverty and death. In other words, the victory of anti-values against which we have agreed to co-operate in order to build a Europe and a world where individual freedom and human life are respected, where everything is done to ensure that people live in the best possible, decent conditions, where all problems are resolved through negotiation, without recourse to violence.

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen,
Distinguished delegates,

The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe has taken a number of initiatives since 2014 to stop the advancing Russian aggression against Ukraine. Such efforts were undertaken by the OSCE Project Co-ordinator in Ukraine, who started their activities in the 1990s, and the Special Monitoring Mission established in 2014.

For eight years, civilian, international, unarmed observers have been monitoring the situation on the ground and providing us with relatively objective and reliable information about the situation *inter alia* in Donbass, where the Russian occupation has continued since 2014.

During my mission as President since 2015, I have had an opportunity to meet in person the envoys, the OSCE observers sent to Ukraine. Unfortunately, these people, the observers working there, were helpless in the face of Russian actions restricting the ability of OSCE personnel to carry out their tasks. I heard it from them during our meeting and I saw that helplessness in their eyes.

What is more, just moments before the full-scale invasion started, the Russian Federation decided to challenge the consensus reached on extending the mission’s mandate which resulted in its closure. Today we can see, beyond a shadow of a doubt, that Russian intentions on that count were not sincere right from the start. They served merely as a smokescreen for preparing an armed assault, which we are seeing now.

Unfortunately, Ukraine is not the only area where Russia is pursuing a policy contradictory to the rudimentary principles of the OSCE.

It is with deep concern that we are following the actions that Russia is taking, threatening the internal stability and security of Moldova, in response to that country's sovereign choice of a path towards integration with the European Union. It is incompatible with the objectives and values of the OSCE to keep up, with the participation and protection of Russian troops, the frozen conflict in Transnistria, where for more than 30 years a zone of lawlessness, corruption and criminality has existed, in the form of the so-called Pridnestrovian Moldavian Republic – an artificial entity created in fact by Russia.

Russia plays a similarly destructive role in the Balkans, where it is attempting to rebuild its former sphere of influence. Moscow-backed separatist ambitions in the Republika Srpska in Bosnia and Herzegovina could lead to a renewed conflict in the region, which has only recently begun to overcome the aftermath of a bloody years-long war, thanks, among other things, to the efforts of the OSCE. In this context, one must also recall the case of Montenegro, where, in order to prevent the country from joining the North Atlantic Alliance, Russia went so far as to attempt to organize a coup d'état. We can all vividly remember those experiences.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The experience of recent years shows that our activities carried out within the framework of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe are beneficial only if the parties involved are willing to improve the situation on the basis of unquestionable principles of sovereignty and a peaceful dialogue. In such cases, the OSCE's involvement facilitated reforms across many sectors in various countries: from security to the judiciary, especially in the post-Soviet region and the Balkans.

The war against Ukraine, in turn, has proved that the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe is not able to guarantee peace if its actions are sabotaged from within by an aggressor who does not respect the accepted principles which we abide by.

Over the last year of the Polish Chairmanship, we have tried to find a solution to the Moscow-induced security crisis using all possible OSCE mechanisms. Unfortunately, the Organization's capabilities in the political and military sphere are in fact insufficient. We have to be clear about that. The OSCE's capabilities are based on the goodwill and co-operation of the warring parties.

When a conflict is triggered by the aggressive action of a participating State, the Organization is apparently unable to reach a peaceful agreement.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The Russian invasion of Ukraine is a challenge for every OSCE participating State. Together, we must show that the values and principles we developed together decades ago are still valid and shared by us. It is absolutely necessary. We will not accept criminal aggression in the twenty-first century. We will not accept violations of humanitarian law, deliberate attacks on civilian infrastructure and the environment. There is no acceptance and there cannot be acceptance of that, either now or in the future.

I want to make it clear, speaking in this forum, that there can be no consent on our part either to any agreement that would legitimize forcible shifting of the borders. All peace talks must take place with the voluntary consent of the Ukrainian authorities. Only Ukrainians themselves have the right to decide about the future of their country.

I have no doubt that a possible agreement which would in any way grant or tolerate Russia's wartime territorial gains, would in fact be a ticking bomb planted under the European security system that would sooner or later explode. The force of the explosion will be devastating to all of us, to our countries and societies, to peace and international order. We must be aware of this when considering possible scenarios for ending the war started by Russia against Ukraine.

Recognition of Russian gains at the expense of Ukraine is simply a road to a new, great conflict, including a world war. I am not saying this to frighten anyone. However, taking Europe's security seriously requires considering all options. We must learn lessons from the events of 24 February 2022. I vividly recall that even shortly before the Russian aggression was launched, a full-scale conflict seemed quite impossible to many capitals. But for 281 days now, it has been a daily reality for millions of Ukrainians. Therefore, we must now take all scenarios into account, including those which seem improbable in our rational European way of thinking. Today it is really impossible to tell what is improbable, after all that happened and is still happening in Ukraine now.

In the current situation, for the sake of protecting the existing security order, we must ensure that international law is respected and that those guilty of violating it are punished. We must not spare efforts to enforce the fundamental principles enshrined in the UN Charter, the founding acts of the OSCE, the Helsinki Final Act and the Charter of Paris for a New Europe.

We must step up efforts to ensure respect for international humanitarian law and human rights, and support the investigation and prosecution of those responsible for the most serious of crimes. In turn, those guilty of crimes of aggression, war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide must bear full criminal liability. Only in this way can we restore peace in Europe and prevent acts of aggression in the future.

Ladies and gentlemen,

I assure our Macedonian friends, who will take over the Chairmanship of the OSCE next year, of our support for the successful implementation of the Organization's mission. They can count on our support in their efforts to ensure respect for international law, including the fundamental principles of the UN Charter, such as respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States, non-interference in the internal affairs of other States and the peaceful resolution of international disputes.

Ladies and gentlemen,

I hope that the OSCE Ministerial Council, which is about to begin, will be able to develop a common position on the causes of the current crisis in the international environment. This would lay a strong foundation for a constructive discussion on how to deal with the current challenges as well as similar ones in the future.

Today it is a great challenge for the Organization. I am convinced that thanks to your wisdom and determination you will succeed in working out such solutions. I wish you fruitful deliberations.

Thank you for your attention.

**STATEMENT BY
THE DELEGATION OF THE CZECH REPUBLIC**

(Annex 2 to MC(29) Journal of 1 and 2 December 2022)

Mr. Chairperson,

I fully subscribe to all the points just mentioned by the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and now I would like to make a few remarks in my national capacity.

The OSCE of today is different from what it was a year ago. Russia's aggression against Ukraine trampled the most fundamental principles the OSCE was founded on. I am calling on Russia to stop the war and completely withdraw its forces from the territory of Ukraine.

All the crimes committed during the illegal invasion must be prosecuted and the perpetrators must face justice. I am taking this opportunity to thank the rapporteurs of the Moscow Mechanism, as well as the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights and numerous non-governmental organizations for their work in keeping records of the violations. I am also calling on all of you to support the creation of a special international tribunal to prosecute crimes of aggression committed by Russia.

On behalf of the Czech Republic, I would like to stress that we believe in the purpose and principles of the OSCE.

In the future, the OSCE can play an important role in a new security architecture in Europe. The collection of commitments and confidence-building measures is unique and needs to be preserved and further developed.

An essential asset is the OSCE's comprehensive approach to security. We should nourish it, not weaken it. Obstructions of the human rights mechanisms weaken also our security in the OSCE area. With stagnation in the politico-military agenda, the economic and environmental dimension will stall as well.

Already today, the support of the OSCE is needed in Ukraine. It is regrettable that most of the OSCE activities in the country had to be terminated. We cannot give in to the blackmail of the aggressor. The Czech Republic applauds the new OSCE Support Programme for Ukraine. We will donate 160,000 euros for the OSCE activities in support of Ukraine. A part of this donation will be earmarked for the OSCE Documentation Centre in Prague for the upkeep of the OSCE files evacuated from the country after the invasion.

Finally, for the OSCE to be able to fulfil its role, it needs financial stability. I am calling on all participating States to take a responsible approach and secure a budget that will provide for effective and efficient functioning of the OSCE across all three dimensions.

Thank you for your attention, and I am looking forward to welcoming the delegations of participating States next September at the 31st OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum, traditionally held in Prague.

I kindly ask you, Mr. Chairperson, to attach my statement to the journal of the day.
Thank you.

**STATEMENT BY
THE DELEGATION OF BULGARIA**
(Annex 3 to MC(29) Journal of 1 and 2 December 2022)

Mr. Chairperson,
Madam Secretary General,
Distinguished colleagues,
Ladies and gentlemen,

The OSCE participating States, all of us who sit around this table today, were preparing to celebrate in two years' time the symbolic 50th anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act that marked the beginning of a new era of peaceful co-existence and co-operative security. The post-Cold War time has been marked by other milestones that laid the foundations of peace and prosperity in our part of the globe: the Paris Charter, summits and Ministerial Council meetings in the years to follow, have left their blueprints upgrading our OSCE *acquis*, strengthening OSCE commitments and principles.

Where are we today?

Ten months after the war of aggression started by Russia against its neighbour Ukraine, we live in a different Europe. This reckless act has broken all the rules of international order and is still ruining one by one the achievements of our predecessors. The UN Charter and the OSCE founding documents have been clear: the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of States must be respected and borders cannot be changed by military force.

Ukraine is exercising its inherent right of self-defence under Article 51 of the UN Charter. We reiterate our unwavering support for Ukrainian independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders and territorial waters. We will not recognize any illegal entities nor annexation of Ukraine's territory. Bulgaria will continue to be part of the political, technical, economic and humanitarian support for Ukraine as long as it takes, including in the OSCE context.

We urge Russia to immediately cease its military actions and completely and unconditionally withdraw its forces and military equipment from the entire territory of Ukraine. Russia must act in a responsible way, contain all nuclear risks pertaining to nuclear weapons and civilian nuclear installations in Ukraine, and respect all its obligations under international law.

We are deeply concerned by Russia's military build-up and aggressive posture in the Black Sea region. Russia has turned the illegally annexed Crimean peninsula into a launch pad for further invasion into Ukrainian territory along with seaborne strikes by its Black Sea navy. Moscow's expanding control over critical sea lanes of communication in the Black Sea has further restricted the freedom of navigation.

The war raises also deep concerns about human rights and international humanitarian law violations by the Russian Federation, which may amount to crimes against humanity and war crimes. Documentation, investigation, and prosecution of all possible war crimes committed in Ukraine must be ensured. We support all efforts to gather evidence and

document atrocities of the war, including by the International Criminal Court, the UN Human Rights Monitoring Mission and the OSCE, through the OSCE Moscow Mechanism, activated by a vast majority of OSCE participating States, including Bulgaria, in order to hold those responsible to account.

We reiterate our call on Belarus to stop enabling Russia's aggression and to abide by its international obligations. Shared responsibility will require shared accountability.

No business as usual is possible when a large-scale war threatening stability in Europe is waged by one OSCE participating State against another. The Organization has been paralysed by a historic low level of trust and the misuse of the consensus rule. Key activities in all three dimensions of the OSCE have been blocked. The lack of an approved budget for the second year in a row and the deplorable use of the budget process as a political tool have put the OSCE institutions, structures and field missions in a financial limbo. We have to admit: the OSCE today is a shadow of its former self and the short-term strategy for the Organization would be to endure.

Indeed, the OSCE is a peacetime organization. It cannot fulfil its mandate and be effective in a highly confrontational security environment. But we cannot just wait for stability to return to Europe. We should work towards it in the OSCE and engage in strategic thinking for the aftermath of the war in Ukraine. We should not allow the future principles of European security to be defined elsewhere.

The history of the OSCE has been the history of difference. That is not an argument to stop drawing on its tools, it is an argument for more effective diplomacy.

In conclusion, I would like to thank the Polish Chairmanship for their hospitality and for their leadership of the Organization in hard and very challenging times.

I wish good luck, resilience and success to the incoming Chairmanship of the Republic of North Macedonia. We will be there to support your efforts as Chairmanship of the OSCE Forum for Security Co-operation in the second term of next year.

I kindly ask you to attach this statement to the journal of the day.

I thank you.

**STATEMENT BY
THE DELEGATION OF CROATIA
(ALSO ON BEHALF OF ALBANIA, BELGIUM, BULGARIA,
CANADA, THE CZECH REPUBLIC, DENMARK, ESTONIA,
FINLAND, FRANCE, GERMANY, GREECE, HUNGARY, ICELAND,
ITALY, LATVIA, LITHUANIA, LUXEMBOURG, MONTENEGRO,
THE NETHERLANDS, NORTH MACEDONIA, NORWAY, POLAND,
PORTUGAL, ROMANIA, SLOVAKIA, SLOVENIA, SPAIN,
SWEDEN, TÜRKIYE, THE UNITED KINGDOM
AND THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA)**

(Annex 4 to MC(29) Journal of 1 and 2 December 2022)

Mr. Chairperson,

This statement is delivered on behalf of the following NATO Allied participating States: Albania, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Montenegro, the Netherlands, North Macedonia, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Türkiye, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America, as well as the NATO Invitees Finland and Sweden.

The OSCE area is not at peace. Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, which we condemn in the strongest possible terms, gravely undermines international security and stability. It is a blatant violation of international law, including the UN Charter, and contravenes the founding principles of the Helsinki Final Act, and other OSCE commitments.

We stand in full solidarity with the people and the Government of Ukraine in their heroic defence of their country. We reiterate our unwavering support for Ukraine's independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders extending to its territorial waters. We condemn and will never recognize Russia's illegal and illegitimate attempted annexation of Ukrainian territories, including Crimea. We fully support Ukraine's inherent right to self-defence and to choose its own security arrangements. We will continue to provide comprehensive support to Ukraine for as long as it takes.

Russia has caused immense human suffering and massive displacements, disproportionately affecting Ukraine's women and children. Russia bears sole responsibility for this humanitarian catastrophe. We praise the courage and resilience of the people of Ukraine. We fully support the work of the international community – including the use of OSCE tools and initiatives such as invocations of the Moscow Mechanism and Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights monitoring – to hold accountable all those responsible for violations of international humanitarian law and abuses of international human rights law in Ukraine. We particularly condemn Russia's attacks on civilians and civilian infrastructure and conflict-related sexual violence. In this context we underline the relevance of the women, peace and security agenda to the OSCE's work. We deplore Russia's obstruction and undermining of the OSCE's work, especially vis-à-vis the closure of its Ukraine-related field presence, which makes the implementation of the Support Programme for Ukraine even more urgent.

We are also concerned by the increasingly bellicose rhetoric and actions of Belarus. It must abide by international law and stop its complicity in Russia's illegal war.

Russia is the most significant and direct threat to our peace, security and stability. It seeks to establish spheres of influence and direct control through coercion, subversion, disinformation, aggression and illegal attempted annexations. Russia's military build-up, including in the Baltic, Black and Mediterranean Sea regions and the High North, along with its military integration with Belarus, challenges our security. Russia's posture, disinformation and dangerous nuclear rhetoric, as well as its proven willingness to use force to pursue its political goals, undermine the rules-based international order.

We do not seek confrontation and we pose no threat to Russia. We will continue to respond to Russia's threats and hostile actions in a united and responsible way. We will significantly strengthen deterrence and defence, enhance our resilience against Russia's coercion and support our partners to counter malign interference and aggression.

Russia has instigated conflicts in the OSCE area and inhibited efforts to resolve them. This is most recently evident in its further invasion of Ukraine. We call on Russia to end its occupation of Georgia's regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia and withdraw all the forces and materiel it has stationed in Georgia and the Republic of Moldova without their consent. We firmly support their sovereignty, independence, and territorial integrity within their internationally recognized borders.

We call on Russia to cease its aggression and violations of international law and contravention of principles and commitments of the OSCE in all three dimensions of security encompassed in the Helsinki Final Act, including those relating to arms control, transparency, confidence- and security-building measures, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and democratic governance, which are essential to advance friendly relations and co-operation among States. We reiterate the key importance of the OSCE as a unique forum for dialogue on comprehensive security.

In conclusion, we call on Russia to immediately stop its war of choice and fully and unconditionally withdraw from Ukraine.

The participating States subscribing to this statement request its attachment to the journal of this Ministerial Council meeting.

**STATEMENT BY
THE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE EUROPEAN UNION**

(Annex 5 to MC(29) Journal of 1 and 2 December 2022)

The delegation of the Czech Republic, in its capacity as EU Presidency, passed the floor to the representative of the European Union, who delivered the following statement:

We express our gratitude to the Polish Minister of Foreign Affairs Zbigniew Rau and to the Polish Chairmanship for their hospitality in Łódź, and for the manner in which they steered the Organization during unprecedented and turbulent times. We would also like to pay tribute to Ambassador Adam Hałaciński and his excellent team in Vienna for their tireless efforts throughout this most challenging year for the OSCE area and for the Organization itself.

For anyone sitting in the plenary, following online, or participating in the various side events, and in the Parallel Civil Society Conference, the message was resoundingly clear: The overwhelming majority of participating States unequivocally condemned Russia's unprovoked, unjustified and brutal war of aggression against Ukraine with Belarus' complicity as a gross violation of international law, the UN Charter and OSCE principles and commitments, and as the most critical threat to our common security since the end of the Second World War. We will continue to support Ukraine to defend its independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders for as long as it takes. We remain determined to support Ukraine's resilience and reconstruction, especially in the wake of Russia's continued indiscriminate attacks targeting civilians and civilian objects and infrastructure.

Equally resounding was the call to ensure accountability for the heinous acts committed during Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine. The toll in civilian lives is appalling and poses a fundamental challenge for all of us who believe in the respect for international law, and OSCE principles and commitments. The European Union is steadfast in its commitment to ensure there is no impunity for the crimes committed, including torture and other cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment, sexual and gender-based violence as well as unlawful deportations, and we will support all efforts, including within the OSCE, to ensure justice for victims. The OSCE Moscow Mechanisms reports are a crucial tool in this regard.

During this Ministerial, it was also reaffirmed that Russia and Belarus' external aggression is mirrored by a systematic and drastic internal repression against their own populations. We reiterate our call on Belarus to refrain from any further involvement in Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, to stop the orchestrated repression and intimidation campaign, to release all those arbitrarily detained and political prisoners, to respect media freedom and civil society and start an inclusive national dialogue. Likewise, we once again call on Russia to reverse the legislation used for the ongoing repression against and persecution of its citizens, and to act in accordance with the spirit and letter of all its OSCE commitments.

Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine has hampered all OSCE conflict resolution mechanisms, thus making our region more unstable. The European Union will continue to support the OSCE resolution processes and will remain actively engaged in the

discussions. We urge all parties to conflicts, as well as all participants in the conflict resolution formats, to engage constructively in good faith and to implement their respective commitments. Political will is key to achieving progress in making our region more stable, prosperous and peaceful.

Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine and its people, and its cross-dimensional and cross-regional consequences have dominated the discussions and overshadowed the outcomes traditionally expected from a Ministerial Council. At the same time, the value of the OSCE as an important and inclusive regional platform for security and co-operation has been reaffirmed. In the months ahead, we should use its tools and assets in all three dimensions of security, in particular to address the multifaceted consequences of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine and its destabilizing actions in the whole OSCE area, grounded in our common OSCE commitments and our renewed determination to implement them.

We commend the Civic Solidarity Platform for organizing its Parallel Civil Society Conference and value its contribution for the Ministerial Council formulated in the Łódź Declaration. Civil society is essential for ensuring functioning and vibrant democracies, and we therefore remain firm in safeguarding the openness and inclusivity of the OSCE towards civil society organizations.

The EU reiterates its firm support for the OSCE Secretary General, the Secretariat and the other executive structures, including the field operations, as well as for the autonomous institutions and their heads. It is our common responsibility to preserve the institutions and their strong mandates, and ensure their proper functioning, including adequate financial means. In the same vein, the EU will continue to work closely with the current and incoming Chairmanships to support and safeguard the valuable work of OSCE field operations. We also look forward to our continued fruitful co-operation with the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, as well as with the OSCE Partners for Co-operation.

We look forward to working with the incoming Chairmanship of North Macedonia. We will support North Macedonia and its goal to lead the Organization and all participating States to a renewed focus on respect for the fundamental principles of the OSCE. This will help us ensure that the OSCE remains a key forum for meaningful dialogue on the unprecedented challenges to European security we currently face.

To conclude, the crisis we confront is neither a flaw in the rules and underlying principles of the European security order nor a failure of the OSCE itself – it is the failure of one participating State, actively supported by another one, to abide by those rules and principles. The solution is clear: just as Russia's destructive and illegal actions have inflicted immense human suffering, tried to upend the rules-based international order and damaged Russia's credibility, Russia can choose a different course and take different actions – beginning by immediately bringing its war against Ukraine to an end, completely and unconditionally withdrawing all of its troops and military equipment from the entire territory of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders, and by implementing its international obligations. No one benefits from Russia's actions. Not the Russian people. Not the people of neighbouring countries. Not the people of Europe and of the entire OSCE area. Only when all 57 participating States play by the rules we have all willingly agreed upon and uphold universal values and principles can we achieve a common, indivisible security space built on trust and co-operation and at peace.

I kindly request that this statement be attached to the journal of today's Ministerial Council meeting.

The candidate countries the Republic of North Macedonia¹, Montenegro¹, Albania¹, Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova, the potential candidate country Bosnia and Herzegovina¹, the EFTA countries Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway, members of the European Economic Area, as well as Andorra, Monaco and San Marino, and the OSCE Partner for Co-operation Australia align themselves with this statement.

1 The Republic of North Macedonia, Montenegro, Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.

**STATEMENT BY
THE DELEGATION OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA**

(Annex 6 to MC(29) Journal of 1 and 2 December 2022)

We commend the Polish Chairmanship for its leadership and dedication to this Organization in extremely challenging times, thanks to the able stewardship of Chairperson-in-Office Foreign Minister Zbigniew Rau and you, Ambassador Hałaciński, dear Adam. Your focus on defending the foundational principles of the OSCE has been essential to the Organization's survival and its continuing ability to function as an effective platform to uphold our shared values. You have our full support and enduring thanks for your efforts.

The United States looks forward to working with North Macedonia in 2023 as we continue to address the unprecedented challenges to security and prosperity in our region. In Ukraine, Russia continues to wage a war of aggression that is unprecedented in the history of this Organization in its size and impact. The increasingly dire cost in terms of human life and economic damage continues to shock our senses while the unconscionable violations of international humanitarian law and barbarous atrocities committed by Russia's forces have no place in this world. Moreover, the overlapping humanitarian, energy, and food crises Russia's war has caused are imposing widespread suffering on vulnerable people around the world while complicating international efforts to address vital issues like climate change. Nowhere is the risk posed to us all more clearly visible than in the breathtakingly reckless actions taken by Russia in and around Ukraine's civil nuclear facilities. Moscow's apparent contempt for potential nuclear catastrophe should serve as a stark reminder to us all that nobody is immune from the consequences of Putin's disastrous war. All of this is due to the Kremlin's drive to achieve its neo-imperialist ambitions and unilaterally redraw the borders of its neighbours at any cost.

Russia's undermining of our collective security is visible not just in Ukraine but in other areas of the OSCE area as well. For more than 30 years, Russia's troops have remained on the territory of Moldova without the host country's consent in violation of its sovereignty. We urge Russia to fully withdraw its troops and ammunition in line with the commitments it made at the 1999 Istanbul Summit. Russia's invasion of Georgia in 2008 and its ongoing military presence on Georgian territory without Georgia's consent violate Georgia's sovereignty and territorial integrity and international law. The United States offers our unwavering support for Georgia and stands with the Group of Friends of Georgia in pressing Russia to honour the terms of the 2008 ceasefire agreement. The United States will also continue to work with Armenia and Azerbaijan bilaterally as well as together with the European Union, the OSCE, and other partners towards a comprehensive agreement that brings lasting peace to the region.

OSCE field operations and the three independent institutions are indeed the "crown jewels" of this Organization. Through our field missions we deliver concrete, on the ground results – working closely with the host governments and civil society to assist participating States to achieve their commitments in all three dimensions of the OSCE and, by so doing, improve security in our region. The Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, Representative on Freedom of the Media, and High Commissioner on National Minorities, as well as the various Special Representatives, play integral roles in helping all participating States meet their Helsinki Final Act commitments. Actions to block or otherwise impede progress on OSCE objectives and core functions – such as the mandated annual Human

Dimension Implementation Meeting or field operations or approval of the Unified Budget – directly erode the comprehensive security which the Organization is intended to uphold. We can and will overcome these hurdles. We will work with the Chairmanship and others who want to see the OSCE succeed to build creatively on ground-breaking initiatives, such as the Support Programme for Ukraine and the hugely successful Warsaw Human Dimension Conference.

More than ever – and precisely because of Russia’s aggression, war crimes, and human rights abuses in Ukraine – the United States places great value on this Organization, its principles and commitments, and its independent institutions. You can be assured of the United States’ continued dedication to the OSCE and our shared goal of building a secure, peaceful, and prosperous region, where all people are treated with dignity and are free to exercise their human rights – and where those who seek to brutally impose their might in pursuit of neo-imperial ambitions, and their accomplices, are held to account.

Mr. Chairperson, we request that this statement be attached to the journal of this Ministerial Council.

**STATEMENT BY
THE DELEGATION OF FINLAND
(ALSO ON BEHALF OF ALBANIA, ANDORRA, AUSTRIA,
BELGIUM, BULGARIA, CANADA, CROATIA, CYPRUS, THE CZECH
REPUBLIC, DENMARK, ESTONIA, FRANCE, GEORGIA, GERMANY,
GREECE, HUNGARY, ICELAND, IRELAND, ITALY, LATVIA,
LIECHTENSTEIN, LITHUANIA, LUXEMBOURG, MALTA,
MOLDOVA, MONACO, MONTENEGRO, THE NETHERLANDS,
NORTH MACEDONIA, NORWAY, POLAND, PORTUGAL, ROMANIA,
SAN MARINO, SLOVAKIA, SLOVENIA, SPAIN, SWEDEN,
SWITZERLAND, UKRAINE, THE UNITED KINGDOM
AND THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA)**

(Annex 7 to MC(29) Journal of 1 and 2 December 2022)

I have the honour to make this statement on behalf of the following 43 participating States: Albania, Andorra, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Republic of Moldova, Monaco, Montenegro, the Netherlands, North Macedonia, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, San Marino, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Ukraine, the United Kingdom, the United States of America, and my own country, Finland.

Thirty years ago, in Stockholm, OSCE ministers emphasized that the OSCE's comprehensive concept of security relates peace, security and prosperity directly to the observance of human rights and democratic freedoms. Today, Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine serves as a stark reminder of this – that respect for human rights within States remains essential to lasting security among States.

We are appalled by the reports, *inter alia* under the OSCE's Moscow Mechanism, which have found serious violations of human rights and "clear patterns of violations of international humanitarian law by Russian forces" in Ukraine, including targeted killings of civilians, unlawful detentions, abductions and deportations as well as the use of torture and other ill-treatment, including sexual violence. We strongly condemn these grave violations and abuses of human rights and violations of international humanitarian law. All alleged war crimes, crimes against humanity and other violations of the international humanitarian and human rights law must be duly and swiftly investigated. For our common commitments to regain their force, those responsible must be held to account.

Mr. Chairperson,

Over the past decades, we have made great strides in advancing human rights and fundamental freedoms. Yet, this year, it is more evident than ever that the fight for freedom, justice and democracy is far from over, and that their defence requires our ongoing vigilance and principled action. Across the region, the space for civil society and independent media is rapidly shrinking, online and offline. Discrimination still excludes many from full, equal and meaningful participation in our societies. And the headlines feature threats and violence against peaceful protesters.

We will continue to speak out when democratic principles, human rights and fundamental freedoms are violated or abused. Whether it is human rights defenders, journalists and media actors facing reprisals for their brave work, or violent crackdowns on peaceful protesters aspiring for democratic change. We will keep pressing for the eradication of torture and other ill-treatment. We will continue to defend free and fair elections. We will challenge stereotypes and prejudice, combat myths with facts, and promote a world where no individual is left behind or targeted for who they are, for whom they love, for what they look like, or for what they believe or say.

Mr. Chairperson,

Civil society is the conscience of our countries. It provides a source of ideas and is a key component of an open, inclusive and thriving democracy. We pay tribute to the individuals and civil society organizations that work tirelessly to defend our shared dedication to democracy, human rights and fundamental freedoms. They deserve our recognition, protection and support.

We highly value the Human Dimension Implementation Meeting as an important platform for the participating States and civil society to review together the implementation of the OSCE human dimension commitments. The Warsaw Human Dimension Conference proved a valuable opportunity for exchange of views with civil society in the regrettable absence of this year's Human Dimension Implementation Meeting. It is important that the Human Dimension Implementation Meeting is held next year, and we will support the efforts of the incoming Chairmanship to that end. We commend the OSCE autonomous institutions for their efforts to promote and protect human rights as core components of peaceful, inclusive and democratic societies. Their work, mandates and institutional independence are essential to the promotion and advancement of democracy, human rights and fundamental freedoms and the rule of law in our region. As many of the conflicts in our region are linked to failures to observe commitments in the human dimension, these efforts are indispensable.

Mr. Chairperson,

All participating States have categorically declared that commitments in the human dimension are matters of direct and legitimate concern to all participating States and do not belong exclusively to the internal affairs of the State concerned. We will continue to fight to place implementation of OSCE principles and commitments at the forefront of our work in this Organization for the benefit of all who call the OSCE area their home.

In closing, we would like to thank the OSCE Chairmanship and the Chairperson of the Human Dimension Committee who work on our behalf to strengthen the human dimension – despite challenging times.

I would be grateful if you would attach this statement to the journal of today's meeting.

Thank you.

**STATEMENT BY
THE DELEGATION OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION**

(Annex 8 to MC(29) Journal of 1 and 2 December 2022)

Mr. Chairperson,
Ladies and gentlemen,

Allow me to make a few comments on the outcome of the Łódź discussions.

First of all, we are extremely disappointed with the manner and working methods of the Polish Chairmanship. We regret that Poland has been unable to overcome its internal complexes and to rise above historical grievances in the interests of strengthening the collective foundations of our Organization's work. The institution of the OSCE Chairmanship-in-Office has suffered serious reputational damage. Furthermore, the current Ministerial Council meeting has been characterized by extremely confrontational and aggressive behaviour displayed by a great number of participating States, which is contrary to the very nature of our Organization. The next country to take the helm of the OSCE, North Macedonia, will need a long time to clean up this difficult "legacy". We trust that the authorities in Skopje will be aided by a sense of decency, professionalism and a focus on strengthening the tools of multilateral diplomacy.

At the same time, we should like to recall that the effectiveness of any international entity depends on how relevant it is to its participants. This applies in full measure to the OSCE. Each of the States present here must regard the Organization as a useful tool for the pursuit of its own interests while taking into account the interests of others. This balance must underpin the OSCE's future action for the benefit of all participating States without exception.

Despite the current challenges, we believe that the OSCE has a future. The Organization is still relevant as a platform for peer-to-peer and mutually respectful dialogue and for co-operation. When the Russophobic hysteria passes, we will be ready to restore the work of the OSCE together. But this will have to be done on a new footing, as the traditional approaches have been thoroughly discredited.

The discriminatory attitude towards Russia and other States "east of Vienna" should be abandoned. There are no "whipping boys" here; there is no place for preaching and lecturing. Let us rekindle the culture of mutually respectful professional dialogue. It is up to the joint efforts of States with equal rights to revive the "spirit of Helsinki". To this end, all the leaders of our countries who signed the documents of the OSCE summits in Istanbul (1999) and Astana (2010) should in practice demonstrate their readiness to be guided by the principle of equal and indivisible security enshrined in them. It is important to reaffirm the willingness to unequivocally honour the commitment not to strengthen one's own security at the expense of the security of others.

Work must be done on the basis of a balance of interests to elaborate specific agreements in the field of "hard" security in the Euro-Atlantic area and to revive the regime of conventional arms control in Europe and confidence- and security-building measures. There is only one acceptable outcome: long-term, legally binding security guarantees for all OSCE participating States.

The principles of consensus and non-intervention in the internal affairs of another participating State are in dire need of reaffirmation. A culture of compromise and the rejection of double standards must be spelled out in OSCE documents. The primacy of the decision-making bodies needs to be enshrined.

It is necessary to preserve the common pan-European space “from Vancouver to Vladivostok” and not to allow its fragmentation and the separation of the western part of the continent from the eastern part.

We are aware of the widespread perception that, with the current extreme level of confrontation, any major ambitious projects are now doomed. We see no reason to agree with this. I am certain that we have to seek agreement. It is the axiom of diplomacy. The Organization cannot be in perpetual “standby mode” – as it is now. Nor can it justify its continued existence with the task of “punishing and containing” Russia. This is a road to nowhere.

We are convinced that it will definitely not be possible to replace the OSCE with a structure similar in terms of composition and competence. If there is no OSCE, its functions will be partially taken over by another format seeking to occupy an independent “niche” in building a bridge between the Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian areas. Do we want such a fate for our Organization? Everything depends on us.

I request that this statement be attached to the journal of the closing session of the Ministerial Council.

Thank you for your attention.

**STATEMENT BY
THE DELEGATION OF CANADA
(ALSO ON BEHALF OF BULGARIA, THE CZECH REPUBLIC,
DENMARK, ESTONIA, FINLAND, ICELAND, IRELAND, LATVIA,
LITHUANIA, NORWAY, POLAND, ROMANIA, SLOVAKIA,
SWEDEN, UKRAINE, THE UNITED KINGDOM AND
THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA)**

(Annex 9 to MC(29) Journal of 1 and 2 December 2022)

This statement is delivered on behalf of Bulgaria, Canada, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Iceland, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Sweden, Ukraine, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America.

We reaffirm our full support for Georgia's sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders.

We condemn Russia's aggression against Georgia in 2008 and express our deep concern over Russia's ongoing military occupation of Georgia's Abkhazia and South Ossetia regions. We also reiterate our condemnation of Russia's ongoing war of aggression against Ukraine.

Fourteen years since the Russian Federation's military invasion of Georgia, we remain deeply concerned over the continued occupation of parts of the territory of Georgia and underline the need for the peaceful resolution of the conflict based on full respect for international law and commitments, including the UN Charter and the Helsinki Final Act.

We welcome Georgia's compliance with the EU-mediated 12 August 2008 ceasefire agreement. We call upon Russia to fulfil immediately its clear obligation under the ceasefire agreement to withdraw its forces to pre-conflict positions, as well as its commitments to allow unfettered access for the delivery of humanitarian assistance and not to impede the creation of international security arrangements on the ground. We call upon Russia to reverse its recognition of the so-called independence of Georgia's Abkhazia and South Ossetia regions.

We condemn Russia's actions, which appear intended to unilaterally establish the Georgia-Russia State border on the segments of the occupied territories and incorporate a part of Aibgha village of Georgia into Krasnodar Krai. In the same vein, we express concern over Russia's seizure of 180 hectares of land in the Gagra district of Abkhazia, Georgia. We are also concerned with ongoing activities within the framework of implementation of the so-called "programme" on creation of a common socio-economic space between the Russian Federation and the Abkhazia region of Georgia as well as the so-called agreement on dual citizenship with the South Ossetia region of Georgia, as another step toward attempted illegal annexation. We urge Russia to reverse this process. We condemn the holding of so-called parliamentary elections in Abkhazia region as well as so-called presidential elections in South Ossetia in 2022 as a blatant violation of Georgia's sovereignty.

We note the January 2021 judgement of the European Court of Human Rights in the case concerning the armed conflict between the Russian Federation and Georgia in

August 2008 and its consequences, including its findings that Russia has exercised effective control over Georgia's regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia following the 12 August 2008 ceasefire agreement, including through its military presence. The Court also ruled that Russia, in violation of the European Convention on Human Rights, tortured Georgian prisoners of war; arbitrarily detained and killed Georgian civilians, and was responsible for their inhuman and degrading treatment; prevented the return of ethnic Georgians to their homes; and failed to conduct investigations into killings of civilians. We call on Russia to fully comply with the judgement, including by allowing internally displaced persons to return to their homes in safety and dignity. We also note the decision of the International Criminal Court of June 2022 that issued arrest warrants for alleged war crimes committed during Russia's invasion in 2008. We call on Russia to co-operate with the International Criminal Court.

We are concerned over the continuous discrimination against Georgians on the grounds of ethnicity in Georgia's Abkhazia and South Ossetia regions and abuses, including severe restrictions on rights related to freedom of movement, education, residence and property, particularly in connection with the destruction of the houses of internally displaced persons. We call on those in control to enable full and unhindered access by international human rights organizations to the Georgian regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. We condemn the decision to replace instruction in the Georgian language with Russian in schools of the ethnic Georgian-inhabited Gali and Akhagori districts in the Abkhazia and South Ossetia regions of Georgia, respectively. We also condemn the obliteration and alteration of Georgian features from the Georgian cultural heritage monuments in both regions.

We are particularly concerned over the ongoing installation of barbed wire fences and other artificial barriers along the occupation line, and by the closure of so-called administrative boundary line crossing points in the South Ossetia region of Georgia for over three years. The partial and temporary reopening of the so-called administrative boundary line crossing points along South Ossetia at Odzisi and Karzmani cannot be viewed as satisfactory. All crossing points with Abkhazia and South Ossetia regions of Georgia must be reopened for all Georgian citizens residing on both sides of the dividing lines.

Isolation and continuous restrictions on freedom of movement have destabilized the situation on the ground and severely impacted the security, safety, well-being, and humanitarian conditions of civilians in conflict-affected areas, particularly in Akhagori district, where reports suggest the local population suffers from shortages of medicine and food, and is denied access to pensions and essentials, including the free healthcare services available in Georgian government-controlled territory. This creates a risk for further depopulation of the Akhagori district.

We remain deeply concerned by ongoing arbitrary detentions around the administrative boundary lines and call for the immediate and unconditional release of Irakli Bebia and all those under arbitrary detention. We condemn the detentions of Kristine Takalandze, Asmat Tavadze, Mamuka Chkhikvadze and Kakhaber Natadze.

We condemn the killing of Georgian citizens Archil Tatunashvili, Giga Otkhazia, and Davit Basharuli, and urge Russia to remove any obstacles to bringing the perpetrators to justice. In this context, we reiterate our support for Georgia's preventive steps aimed at eradicating impunity and note the Otkhazia–Tatunashvili List adopted by the Government of Georgia.

We support the Geneva International Discussions as an existing format with the Russian Federation to address fulfilment of the EU-mediated 12 August 2008 ceasefire agreement, as well as the security, human rights, and humanitarian challenges stemming from the unresolved Russia-Georgia conflict. We underline the necessity of progress on the core issues of the discussions, including on the non-use of force, establishing international security arrangements in Georgia's Abkhazia and South Ossetia regions and ensuring the safe, dignified, and voluntary return of internally displaced persons and refugees in accordance with international law. We strongly support applying the women, peace and security agenda in the Geneva International Discussions in order to facilitate inclusive and sustainable peace and security on the ground.

We express our support for the Incident Prevention and Response Mechanisms (IPRMs) in Ergneti and Gali and emphasize that the six meetings were held in Ergneti in 2022. The IPRMs can play an important role in preventing the escalation of the conflict and in helping to protect the safety and security of people on the ground. We express our great concern over the lengthy suspension of the Gali IPRM and urge its resumption without further delay or preconditions, in line with the ground rules.

We reaffirm our unwavering support for the EU Monitoring Mission and call upon Russia to allow the EU Monitoring Mission to implement its mandate in full, including by enabling the EU Monitoring Mission's access on both sides of the administrative boundary lines.

We welcome the multi-stakeholder process for developing a comprehensive "State Strategy for De-occupation and Peaceful Conflict Resolution" by the Government of Georgia, as well as the strategic review of the reconciliation and engagement policy. We support the Georgian Government's "A Step to a Better Future" peace initiative, aimed at improving the humanitarian and socio-economic conditions of people residing in Georgia's Abkhazia and South Ossetia regions and at fostering confidence-building among divided communities. We urge active work on reconciliation and engagement programmes and stand ready to support.

We encourage the OSCE's engagement in the process of finding a peaceful resolution to the Russia-Georgia conflict. We regret that due to Russia's refusal to join consensus, the mandate of the OSCE Mission to Georgia was discontinued in 2009. We encourage the OSCE participating States to decide on the reopening of the OSCE cross-dimensional mission in Georgia, including with a monitoring capacity that would enable the mission to operate without restrictions across the administrative boundary lines. The reopening of the mission would strengthen considerably the OSCE's engagement in the Geneva International Discussions and IPRMs. Furthermore, re-establishment of a field mission would support the OSCE's work in every phase of the conflict cycle.

The Group of Friends of Georgia will continue to raise awareness of the conflict and of developments on the ground, hold Russia accountable for its obligations and commitments, and advocate for the conflict's peaceful resolution.

**STATEMENT BY
THE DELEGATION OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION
(ALSO ON BEHALF OF BELARUS)**

(Annex 10 to MC(29) Journal of 1 and 2 December 2022)

Reaffirming the commitment to the development of friendly, peer-to-peer and mutually beneficial inter-State relations in the Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian area and to the idea of establishing a free, democratic, common and indivisible Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian security community, rooted in agreed principles, shared commitments and common goals,

Emphasizing the need to preserve the central co-ordinating role of the United Nations in inter-State relations and further strengthen the primary role of the United Nations Security Council in maintaining international peace and security and in facilitating the resolution of international problems,

Guided by the need to uphold and respect the fundamental principle of equal and indivisible security whereby no State, group of States or organization can have any pre-eminent responsibility for maintaining peace and stability or strengthen their security at the expense of the security of others,

We affirm the importance of preserving the OSCE as a regional pan-European forum operating on the basis of the consensus rule and the principle of the sovereign equality of States, in the interests of strengthening security and developing co-operation among participating States.

We are convinced of the need to enhance the effectiveness of the OSCE and eliminate double standards and geographical and thematic imbalances in its activities.

We believe that the Chairmanship-in-Office, the Secretary General and all executive structures of the OSCE should unfailingly observe the Rules of Procedure and other decisions of the decision-making bodies and adhere to the principles of impartiality, transparency and accountability.

We advocate the promotion of a positive agenda, openness to discussing the most difficult issues and challenges, and a commitment to non-ideological pragmatic dialogue to solve common security problems, which in particular involves:

- Joining efforts to counter transnational threats on an equal basis, primarily international terrorism, organized crime, illegal migration, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, threats to the security of information and communication technologies, illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons and drugs, and trafficking in human beings;
- Developing mutually beneficial co-operation in addressing economic and environmental challenges in the OSCE area, expanding co-operation, free from protectionism and discrimination, in the fields of transport, energy, trade and tourism, strengthening connectivity, and ensuring social and economic rights of citizens;

- Respecting the diversity of the civilizational, cultural and historical models of OSCE participating States, considering the concepts of exceptionalism and superiority of some participating States over others to be inadmissible;
- Promoting and protecting human rights and fundamental freedoms and unconditionally respecting the ethnic, cultural, linguistic and religious identity of national minorities and other ethnic groups;
- Stepping up efforts to combat all forms of racial, ethnic and religious discrimination, anti-Semitism, Christianophobia, Islamophobia, xenophobia, manifestations of aggressive nationalism and neo-Nazism, and countering discrimination in sport, culture, education and science;
- Preserving and promoting freedom of movement of citizens and human contacts, free circulation of goods and capital without any ideological, political or sanction restrictions, dividing lines, double standards, closed politico-military or politico-economic alliances, and without unilaterally advancing one's interests at the expense of the interests of others in the OSCE area;
- Joining efforts to maintain an open and secure global information space, free of political censorship and suppression of dissent.

The present statement remains open for alignment by other OSCE participating States and Partners for Co-operation.

**STATEMENT BY
THE DELEGATION OF CANADA**
(Annex 11 to MC(29) Journal of 1 and 2 December 2022)

Mr. Chairperson,

I would like to begin by thanking Poland for their warm hospitality during this year's Ministerial Council. Canada would also like to make a national closing statement, in addition to the joint statements that have included Canada.

While we may be leaving Łódź without adopting any decision, we are leaving with a sense of overwhelming unity: overwhelming unity in condemnation of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, and overwhelming unity on the importance of standing together to defend the OSCE and its principles.

The OSCE provides us with a fantastic array of tools to prevent conflict and build security. As many have noted over the past two days, the challenges that we face are not a failure of the OSCE as an institution; they are a reflection of some States' flagrant refusal to abide by the Helsinki Final Act principles and their OSCE commitments. Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine is by far the most egregious example of this.

In order to support all of us, OSCE participating States, in fulfilling our commitments, we must allow the Secretariat and the autonomous institutions, the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, the Representative on Freedom of the Media, and the High Commissioner on National Minorities, the ability to carry out their mandates. No participating State should be able to unilaterally block the OSCE's budget, or the mandates of its field missions. This is especially so when the host nation is calling for an OSCE presence.

I would like to reiterate Minister Joly's and Canada's thanks to the staff of the OSCE for their creativity, determination and resilience in continuing to uphold the mandate of the Organization in such difficult circumstances.

We very much look forward to working with North Macedonia as Chairmanship in the coming year, and we regret that a decision on the 2024 Chairmanship has not been approved due to the objection of Russia.

Mr. Chairperson,

I would also like to reiterate Minister Joly's comment yesterday : "*Contrairement aux allégations du ministre Lavrov, c'est la Russie qui a refusé le dialogue. La Russie a non seulement fracassé la confiance entre les États participants de cette organisation, mais aussi à l'échelle mondiale.*" Contrary to the claims of the Russian Federation, it is Russia that has refused dialogue. Russia's actions have shattered the trust and confidence not only of participating States in this organization, but globally. The path to a meaningful dialogue from such actions will be long and difficult, and the OSCE will be a critical platform for this.

In closing, Canada would like to sincerely thank you again and the entire Polish Chairmanship for your efforts this year. It has been an extremely difficult year and Canada applauds the firm and principled leadership you have provided as Chairperson. For this,

Ambassador Hałaciński, you and your outstanding team have our sincere admiration and gratitude.

Thank you.

I would like to request that this statement be attached to the journal of the day.

**STATEMENT BY
THE DELEGATION OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION**

(Annex 12 to MC(29) Journal of 1 and 2 December 2022)

“While joining the consensus regarding the Permanent Council decision on the adoption of the agenda of the Twenty-Ninth Meeting of the OSCE Ministerial Council, the Russian Federation expresses its profound disappointment that, for the first time in the Organization’s history, the host country, which is entrusted with the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office function, has failed to ensure equal participation of the ministers from all participating States without discrimination.

The arbitrary decision by the Polish authorities not to allow the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation to attend the Ministerial Council meeting in Łódź makes it impossible to adopt any substantive decisions at the forthcoming ministerial meeting and seriously undermines the OSCE’s potential as a platform for broad-based, high-level political dialogue.

We trust that future OSCE Chairmanships will not embark on such irresponsible actions, which are detrimental to the credibility and effectiveness of the Organization.

I request that this statement be attached to the adopted decision and included in the journal of today’s meeting of the Permanent Council.”

**STATEMENT BY
THE OSCE TROIKA**
(MC.DEL/31/22 of 2 December 2022)

We, the Foreign Ministers of Sweden, Poland and North Macedonia, representing the previous, current and incoming Chairmanships of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) are alarmed by the unprecedented violations of OSCE fundamental principles and commitments. We firmly believe that the use of force and coercion to change borders has no place in the twenty-first century. We reaffirm our full adherence to the Charter of the United Nations and to all OSCE norms, principles and commitments, starting with the Helsinki Final Act, the Charter of Paris for a New Europe, the Charter for European Security and all other OSCE documents to which we have agreed.

Russia's aggression against Ukraine represents the gravest threat to European security since the Second World War and poses a fundamental risk to the OSCE area. We highly value the OSCE as a unique and proven regional security organization promoting the holistic concept of indivisible and comprehensive security, with human rights, democracy and the rule of law at its core. The recent and continuing violations of shared commitments have brought to an historic low the mutual trust and confidence that we have invested in building over the past fifty years. Nevertheless, we remain convinced that the OSCE, with its unique set of conflict management tools and broad co-operation with civil society, remains relevant and will have an important role to play in restoring trust and confidence in our region in the times ahead.

Russia bears full responsibility for the war and ultimately will be held accountable for all its despicable acts against Ukraine and the Ukrainian people. Russia's actions blatantly violate international law, including the UN Charter and OSCE principles and commitments. We condemn Russia's unprovoked and unjustified aggression against Ukraine in the strongest possible terms. We urge the Russian Federation to immediately, completely and unconditionally cease its military actions, and to withdraw all of its military forces from the entire territory of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders. We call on the Belarusian authorities to stop enabling Russia's continuing aggression. Allowing its territory to serve as a staging ground for attacks against Ukraine constitutes an act of aggression in and of itself.

We reaffirm our commitment to the sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders, including the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol. We strongly condemn the Russian Federation's staging of illegal so-called referendums in regions within the internationally recognized borders of Ukraine, in an attempt to legitimize their illegal annexation of the Donetsk, Kherson, Luhansk and Zaporizhzhia regions of Ukraine. These unlawful actions by the Russian Federation have no validity under international law and cannot, and do not, provide the justification for any alteration of the status of these regions of Ukraine.

We are increasingly alarmed by the deteriorating humanitarian situation in Ukraine. In particular we are profoundly concerned by the high number of civilian casualties, including women and children, and by steeply rising numbers of internally displaced persons and refugees in urgent need of humanitarian assistance.

We deplore the dire humanitarian consequences of the attacks on Ukrainian infrastructure by the Russian armed forces. This includes the shelling of densely populated areas, as well as targeted attacks, in particular of schools and other educational institutions, water and sanitation systems, energy grid, medical facilities and cultural sites. Both indiscriminate attacks, and intentionally directed attacks against the civilian population, are prohibited under international humanitarian law and amount to committing war crimes.

It is devastating to see again the ravages of war on European soil, in Ukraine. We are horrified by the numerous atrocities committed by the Russian armed forces during the last nine months. The world will not ignore these acts or forget their victims. Torture and other cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment, unlawful deportation, and sexual violence all constitute war crimes. The Russian Federation's consistent disregard for human rights and humanitarian law is unacceptable. Such actions blatantly violate international law, the UN Charter and OSCE principles and commitments. We fully support all measures to ensure accountability for these grave breaches of international humanitarian law and international human rights law, including using the tools available within the OSCE. The perpetrators of these serious crimes must be brought to justice.

We require Russia to immediately and without condition release the three local OSCE staff members detained in Donetsk and Luhansk. We condemn atrocities committed against prisoners of war by the Russian armed forces. All prisoners of war should be treated in full compliance with international law, including the Geneva Conventions.

We deeply regret that no consensus could be reached on the extension of the mandates of the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine and the OSCE Project Co-ordinator in Ukraine due to the position of the Russian Federation. Both field operations have been a vital part of the OSCE's efforts to support Ukraine. We encourage the continuation of OSCE work in Ukraine and we welcome efforts aimed at preserving the OSCE's ability to operate in Ukraine in the future, including through the OSCE Support Programme for Ukraine.

Russia's aggression against Ukraine has global implications. The negative impact on global food security is clear, and the manipulation and withholding of food deliveries to those in need is totally unacceptable. We urge Russia to implement the UN Black Sea Grain Initiative in good faith. We remain gravely concerned by Russia's nuclear threats, as well as by the ongoing occupation of, and military actions in and around, the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant that put in peril the people of an entire continent.

We are acutely aware of the destabilizing regional impact of Russia's aggression against Ukraine and its consequences for the security situation more widely. The recent incidents undermining the sovereignty of the Republic of Moldova are of particular concern. We reiterate our unwavering support for, and commitment to, the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republics of Moldova and Georgia. We remain ready to facilitate efforts to guarantee a peaceful, democratic and prosperous future for the South Caucasus. In this regard, we welcome Armenia and Azerbaijan's decision to intensify their dialogue. We also underscore the importance of maintaining the security and stability of South Eastern Europe.

In the face of the dramatic degradation of security in the OSCE area, we strongly support the work of the Secretary General and the OSCE structures and institutions, including the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, the Representative on Freedom of the Media and the High Commissioner on National Minorities. We also welcome the

principled position articulated by the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly. We value all their efforts aimed at addressing the consequences of Russia's aggression against Ukraine. We recognize and value their important work in assisting participating States to continue to implement OSCE commitments. Finally, we are grateful for and remain convinced of the value of effective co-operation with our Mediterranean and Asian Partners for Co-operation in tackling global challenges.

**CLOSING STATEMENT BY
THE CHAIRMAN-IN-OFFICE OF THE OSCE**
(MC.DEL/29/22 of 2 December 2022)

Distinguished Ministers,
Madam Secretary General,
Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen,

This Organization is strengthened by the resilience and resolve of its members and their commitment to its fundamental principles.

That is, it depends on the participating States whether the OSCE will survive and ultimately succeed.

Gustav Radbruch, a famous legal philosopher, once said that the first great task of law is peace.

At the same time, however, following the remarks of Alexis de Tocqueville, we are aware that the weaknesses inherent for human nature often affect compliance with laws.

Still, breaking the rules does not invalidate them.

Violating a law does not make it any less valid.

There are objective boundaries, which cannot be violated even by the will of a nation.

This is the point of my message – for this Organization to succeed, all future Chairmanships and all peace-loving States must not betray the principles of the Helsinki Final Act and the Paris Charter.

Let me offer here a personal experience.

Both the Act and the Charter do not belong only to the realm of diplomats and politicians.

The adoption of these documents and the strength of the principles expressed in them brought hope to many nations of Eastern and Central Europe.

Helsinki was a promise that the Soviet domination would end and the subjugated nations would reclaim their right to determine their future freely.

The spirit of Helsinki was also the spirit of the Polish Solidarity movement – the movement that brought freedom to my homeland.

Then, Paris brought hope for a successful transformation of Europe, for making it whole, free and at peace, as US President Bush said in Mainz in 1989.

The message from Paris emboldened my nation to make a sovereign decision to tie its future with the community of democratic States, believing and supporting the rules-based international order.

Similar decisions taken by a group of States once satellites of the Soviet Union finally ended the Cold War's division of Europe.

Such can be the power of law, when only States commit themselves to respecting it.

Ladies and gentlemen,

I have no doubts that in the next few years, it will be extremely difficult for this Organization to deliver on its mandate.

Unlike in the past, there are now participating States which do not aim to decrease tensions and introduce even basic predictability to military matters in Europe.

And we should not be tempted to think that any real advance in this dimension is possible before the current conflict is settled in an internationally recognized way, in full compliance with international law and with full respect for the will of the Ukrainian people.

Hence, I believe that the next big task for the OSCE is to increase its work in the human and economic dimensions, including on environmental issues.

Indeed, respect for human rights contributes to peace and stability.

That is why, after Russia's opposition to the Human Dimension Implementation Meeting this year, we have recently hosted, together with the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, the Warsaw Human Dimension Conference.

I believe this event was a success and an important step in co-operation between the OSCE and civil society.

I hope that this Organization will continue to effectively use its human dimension to bring positive change to the lives of all oppressed people who struggle to have their basic rights and freedom respected.

But we must also do more in the economic dimension.

In particular, climate change is a universal threat which can affect both individuals and States, bringing more instability and further crises.

Working together on these issues is of utmost importance, if we want to prove to our people that diplomacy matters and can change everyday life. If we want to see this Organization continue to be acknowledged as an indispensable part of the legal and political order in Europe.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Let me finish with emphasizing once again the importance and centrality of the principles of the Helsinki Final Act and the Paris Charter.

These must remain a light that shines in the darkness.

As a signpost for us, they also set a clear course, like a beacon, for those who would like to break out of the darkness.

The preservation of peace and security, dialogue and co-operation, and the human dimension of the OSCE are the cornerstones of this Organization.

They are non-negotiable pillars fundamental to our better future, which, as I firmly believe, is coming.

I consider sticking to this path the legacy of Poland's Chairmanship and of this Organization.

I urge you not to step aside from this path.

I want to thank personally those who supported the Chairmanship during this difficult period:

- Helga-Maria Schmid, the Secretary General of the OSCE, and the OSCE Secretariat;
- Margareta Cederfelt, the President, as well as the members and Secretary General of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly;
- Matteo Mecacci, Teresa Ribeiro and Kairat Abdrakhmanov, the Heads of the OSCE autonomous institutions;
- Heads of the OSCE field operations, and my Personal and Special Representatives;
- Ann Linde, Tobias Billström and Bujar Osmani, my Troika colleagues;
- Fellow ministers, ambassadors and diplomats,
- And last but not least – the excellent team of Conference and Language Services of the OSCE.

I wish every success to North Macedonia as the next Chairmanship of the Organization.

Thank you.

II. REPORTS TO THE MINISTERIAL COUNCIL

**REPORT BY
THE OSCE SECRETARY GENERAL TO THE TWENTY-NINTH
MEETING OF THE MINISTERIAL COUNCIL**

(MC.GAL/4/22 of 5 December 2022)

Mr. President,
Mr. Chairperson,
Madam President of the Parliamentary Assembly,
Excellencies,
Dear colleagues,

Last year in Stockholm I delivered my first address to the OSCE Ministerial Council as your Secretary General. I was optimistic about the great work of this Organization and the potential it holds. There were challenges, of course, and, as ever, plenty of room for improvement. And I expressed the awe and gratitude I have for the powerful work this Organization delivers for so many people across our region every day.

I retain that awe and I retain that gratitude. And yet this year has been one steeped in a different kind of awe – the kind we pair with shock. Not wonder but bewilderment, dismay, devastation.

The war that the Russian Federation launched against its neighbour and fellow participating State – Ukraine – on 24 February defies comprehension in this day and age. It has shaken confidence in the rules-based order that has facilitated relative predictability and stability over so many decades.

The war has had a devastating impact on Ukraine and on its people. On its neighbours. On the region. On the world. It has had a devastating impact on this Organization and the vital work we do.

This was not inevitable.

It is worth recalling that this Organization has its origins in confrontation. We are not and we have never been a like-minded Organization. We were born of the Cold War – not at its end but in its midst.

The Conference for Security and Co-operation in Europe brought together not allies but rivals – in order to manage conflict, find ways to reduce tensions, improve trust, build confidence, and seek common ground for co-operation. That is our business. That is our work. And this is the work we did – not perfectly, but productively – for nearly fifty years.

Yet this year, one participating State, despite efforts to the contrary, chose to pursue violence over dialogue and co-operation. This is not a failure of this Organization, but the betrayal of one of its members.

In the face of this war – and all previous speakers highlighted the many atrocities resulting from it – the overwhelming reaction of most of the OSCE participating States has been resolute condemnation of the war and firm reaffirmation of the Helsinki principles.

Mr. Chairperson – you said that many signals were sent, and you are right.

As tensions rose, I repeatedly raised my deep concerns about the military build-up at Ukraine's borders in the Permanent Council. I provided official early warning – an instrument used only twice before in the OSCE's history.

At the time, the Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine was still in place – still doing its work – with 40 countries contributing to it. I am grateful to you all for supporting the Special Monitoring Mission over the years and I am grateful to all the men and women who served in support of this important mission.

At the time, Ukraine asked us to stay – and we did.

The immediate aftermath of the invasion of 24 February was traumatic. Thankfully, we managed to get all of our international staff out safely. And while we could not evacuate our local male colleagues due to martial law, we helped many of our local staff to relocate within the country. We pulled together and worked around the clock to ensure their safety.

Tragically, one of our local colleagues was killed during shelling on Kharkiv, and later, several national mission members in Donetsk and Luhansk were illegally detained.

I am grateful that we were able to get some released, but three of them remain in detention – held illegally since April – despite our every effort to secure their freedom.

I can assure you that I will continue to pursue their release – and I am grateful to many of you for your continued strong support.

In addition to the Special Monitoring Mission, the Project Co-ordinator in Ukraine had been supporting the country for nearly three decades – working with government and civil society alike to address challenges from environmental degradation to media freedoms.

As of 31 October, both missions are fully closed – not for safety reasons but because consensus on the two mandates was blocked due to the stance of the Russian Federation. But many participating States made clear that the support that the OSCE had provided over so many years should not be lost. And so on 1 November, the new fully donor-funded Support Programme for Ukraine was launched to continue that vital support across all three dimensions.

We have nearly 60 staff on the ground – and Ambassador Villadsen is back in Ukraine as Special Representative. This programme marks a new and innovative way of working. It also sends the clear message to all those sceptical of the OSCE's ability to deliver in the face of potential blockages that we can find a way.

Consensus is a strength of this Organization. But we cannot allow it to be misused to block support that is requested by participating States.

These are dark days, and some say that the OSCE is paralysed, but we cannot ignore the important work that the OSCE continues to do across our region. And this is where the awe and gratitude that I expressed at last year's meeting still holds true. Our staff – in the

Secretariat, our institutions, and our field missions continue to deliver – despite the challenging circumstances in which they operate.

As I have highlighted throughout this year, Ukraine is and remains a priority, but the impact of the war is felt well beyond the country's borders. And we are both obligated and ideally placed to provide support across the region.

Impacts are severe in Moldova, where strikes on Ukraine have knocked out power supplies as well. Our tailored support to Moldova continues and is increasing. We are the only Organization there supporting the security dialogue – facilitating regular meetings between representatives in Chişinău and Tiraspol. And this engagement has intensified throughout this year.

The effects of the war are palpable in Central Asia – whether we consider energy prices, inflation, food insecurity, or other destabilizing factors.

Last year in Stockholm I introduced concrete ideas to support our participating States, particularly in Central Asia, as they deal with the instability resulting from the Taliban takeover in Afghanistan – ideas that you all supported. Since then we have begun implementing a range of projects to address this.

I travelled to Central Asia twice this year – most recently two weeks ago when I visited Uzbekistan. I met with Ministers and senior officials from all five Central Asian States. It is clear that the work we are doing – on connectivity, border security, women's economic empowerment, and more – is delivering meaningful results.

Last year in Stockholm you also agreed a landmark decision that tasks the OSCE to enhance its work on climate change, including in support of regional co-operation. In South Eastern Europe, our work in the Shar/Sara Mountains area provides one of the first examples in the region for joint solutions to climate crises. We have a side event here in Łódź focused on climate change in mountainous regions – a challenge that affects many of our participating States.

And on 17 March I will host a ministerial conference on climate in Vienna where we will take our work on climate and security even further. I look forward to seeing you all there.

We are working with governments, technology companies and civil society to harness the positive power of technology to combat human trafficking – the OSCE is truly a leader on the international stage.

We work with your governments and with civil society to support democratic processes and human rights, to protect national minorities, and to ensure the freedom of the media. I want to pay tribute to Matteo Mecacci, Teresa Ribeiro, Kairat Abdrakhmanov, and their teams for their tireless work and our excellent co-operation. This is truly done in the whole-of-OSCE approach and I am proud of what we are achieving together. I am very grateful for our co-operation with the Parliamentary Assembly, with the President, and with the Secretary General Roberto Montella.

In all that we do, we apply a gender lens, and our work on the women, peace and security agenda spans from working to prevent sexual violence in conflict to supporting women as agents of change.

After we met last December, I inaugurated the Networking Platform for Women Leaders with the objective of supporting women who are active in peacebuilding, conflict resolution, and mediation. As part of this, I launched a mentorship programme in September with participants from Ukraine, Afghanistan and Georgia, among others.

We work with civil society – and I was glad to have met with the civic solidarity platform yesterday.

We work with law enforcement and youth alike to help reduce the potential for young people to engage in terrorism or organized crime.

Before I close, a word on the budget. As this year comes to an end we still do not have an agreed budget, though I am very grateful to the Polish Chairmanship for their efforts in this regard.

Operating on monthly allotments based on 2021 costs is untenable.

We are already struggling to attract and retain staff. When it comes to local staff in our missions, we are in many cases not aligned with United Nations salary scales and therefore not competitive – particularly in the face of growing inflation.

When I talk to our colleagues in our field offices, they love their work. They see the impact. They want to stay. But in many cases they just cannot afford the instability of our budgetary situation.

The OSCE provides extraordinary value. And we continue to work to be an ever more efficient organization. Like all incoming Secretaries General, I arrived eager to improve the Organization – including through a stronger evaluation policy and through the functional review that we have now started to implement in the Secretariat.

But no amount of improved working methods or efficiency measures can make up for the shortfalls we are now confronted with.

This Organization delivers on a mandate broader than any other regional security body – for around 20 cents per citizen per year. Madam President, you are right, this is an Organization that provides the best value for money.

This has been a difficult year in so many ways. But as Secretary General I am proud of the work we have done in support of our values and our commitments. I subscribe to the Chairperson's call to hold on to our values and, as you said, to remain agents of peace.

This Organization remains an essential part of the European security architecture. Aside from the United Nations, we are the only multilateral platform with all relevant stakeholders for European and Eurasian security around the table. We need to protect the essential work we are doing despite the challenging context, and we need to preserve the capacity to realize our potential for more when the situation improves.

We have unique expertise and unique access – and I believe we owe it to the 1.3 billion people who call our region home to continue this vital work.

Minister Rau, I want to thank you and Ambassador Hałaciński for your support and the close working relationship we enjoyed throughout the year.

And Minister Osmani, you can count on our full-fledged support in the year to come.

**LETTER FROM
THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE FORUM FOR SECURITY
CO-OPERATION TO THE MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF
POLAND, CHAIRMAN OF THE TWENTY-NINTH MEETING OF THE
MINISTERIAL COUNCIL OF THE OSCE**

(Annex 13 to MC(29) Journal of 1 and 2 December 2022)

As Chairperson of the Forum for Security Co-operation (FSC), it is my honour to inform you about the Forum's activities in 2022.

During 2022, the FSC Chairmanships worked in close co-operation to ensure continuity and efficiency in the implementation of the Forum's annual work programme.

Since the last Ministerial Council of the OSCE, several initiatives undertaken by participating States led to the adoption of two decisions, both designed to support the implementation of existing politico-military commitments in the field of conventional ammunition marking, registration and record-keeping, and the exchange of military information in electronic format.

This year, the OSCE has witnessed an unprecedented security situation and geopolitical tensions with the unjustified and unprovoked war against Ukraine launched on 24 February 2022. The war against Ukraine brought a negative impact on the whole security architecture in Europe and beyond, jeopardized security and co-operation – the very essence of the Organization. The war caused the largest humanitarian crisis Europe has seen in decades. In its response to the unprecedented security situation, the FSC, in close co-ordination with the Chairmanship of the Permanent Council and the OSCE Secretariat, has conducted the FSC's work in the mode of "no business as usual". The FSC Chairmanships continuously highlighted the importance of co-operation and unity amongst participating States fostering crisis prevention and management by utilizing available tools and keeping dialogue ongoing.

Against this backdrop and based on the decisions on dates, agenda and modalities that participating States adopted in October and November 2021, during the FSC Chairmanship of Azerbaijan, the thirty-second Annual Implementation Assessment Meeting (AIAM) was held in March 2022. Led by Norway and Uzbekistan, this meeting provided an opportunity for participating States to raise and discuss the present and future implementation of agreed confidence- and security-building measures in the light of shared fundamental principles and commitments.

The FSC contributed to the 2022 Annual Security Review Conference, contributing to the exchange of views within its mandate.

In April 2022, Vienna Document 2011, Chapter III, on the risk reduction mechanism for consultation and co-operation as regards unusual military activities, was invoked twice to discuss security concerns. Following consultations to discuss the matters giving rise to concern, two special joint meetings of the FSC and the Permanent Council were convened, during which the situation was assessed. The delegations in attendance focused on providing recommendations to stabilize the situation and halt activities giving rise to concern.

The Forum's meetings this year and the Security Dialogues conducted despite the difficult climate among the OSCE participating States underscore the FSC's importance as a platform for dialogue, addressing security issues of concern.

By maintaining the FSC as an important platform for the exchange of information and views on politico-military aspects of security among the OSCE participating States, in addition to the regular exchanges on the war against Ukraine under the FSC's agenda item "General statements", the following Security Dialogues took place: "Compliance with international humanitarian law and protection of civilians"; "Mine action with the focus on UNSCR 2365"; "Small arms and light weapons (SALW) and stockpiles of conventional ammunition (SCA) – OSCE commitments and lessons learned"; "European security architecture: the role of non-aligned countries"; "Countering terrorism in all its forms and manifestations"; "Post-conflict rehabilitation and peace-building: lessons learned in the OSCE region and the way ahead"; "Children and armed conflict"; "Full, equal and meaningful participation of women"; "Explosive hazards in the OSCE region"; "Armed forces and the environment"; and "The Code of Conduct revisited". In total, the FSC held 11 Security Dialogues in 2022.

To facilitate the implementation of the Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security, the Belgian Chairmanship held a Security Dialogue on the topic, focusing on international humanitarian law; women, peace and security; as well as private military and security companies. Unfortunately, due to the lack of consensus, the eleventh Annual Discussion on the Implementation of the Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security did not take place.

The topic of international humanitarian law was discussed in two Security Dialogues and a joint meeting of the FSC and the Permanent Council. Under the Azerbaijani Chairmanship, one Security Dialogue focused in particular on the protection of civilians. During the Belgian Chairmanship, the Code of Conduct was examined from the perspective of international humanitarian law. Furthermore, a joint meeting of the FSC and the Permanent Council, also under the Belgian FSC Chairmanship, focused on international humanitarian law from a more holistic view on the current state of affairs in the OSCE area.

The Belgian FSC Chairmanship exercised a cross-dimensional approach by dedicating one Security Dialogue to the topic of children in armed conflict, focusing on endeavours to initiate a politico-military dialogue on the impact of armed conflict on children. Secondly, a Security Dialogue was held on armed forces and environment, including considerations for armed forces to reduce their impact on the environment by exploring relevant international frameworks and their implementation.

Under the Azerbaijani FSC Chairmanship, one Security Dialogue was held on countering terrorism in all its forms and manifestations with a focus on the efforts of the international community utilizing the OSCE's concept of comprehensive security, which, *inter alia*, extends to the FSC's area of work.

In the field of SALW, the FSC supported and heard a report on SALW efforts at the UN Eighth Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, held in June 2022 in New York. Furthermore, the FSC adopted a decision

on the updated Best Practice Guide on Ammunition Marking, Registration and Record-Keeping aimed at strengthening efforts in developing policy guidance, operational guidelines and procedures on all aspects of ammunition marking, registration and record-keeping. Due to the unprecedented security situation, the work dedicated to updating the Best Practice Guides on SALW and conventional ammunition was halted shortly thereafter.

While there was no agreement on holding the OSCE Biennial Meeting to Assess the Implementation of the OSCE Documents on Small Arms and Light Weapons and Stockpiles of Conventional Ammunition, the Azerbaijani and Belgian FSC Chairmanships nonetheless held Security Dialogues in this field, devoted to SALW and SCA and explosive hazards in the OSCE area respectively.

The work on the OSCE's assistance projects on SALW and SCA continued in 2022. The OSCE currently manages a portfolio of 20 assistance projects worth over 40 million euros addressing control of SALW and SCA. Several projects are aimed at ensuring the secure and safe management of stockpiles of SALW and SCA through infrastructure, material, equipment upgrades at storage sites, as well as chemical analysis laboratories for ammunition surveillance. A significant part of the projects is providing support to the efforts of combating illicit trafficking in SALW across the OSCE area. Extensive support is being provided to Central Asia in developing technical assistance projects countering the threat and risk of potential trafficking from Afghanistan, which include combating trafficking of SALW. Recently, thanks to the great co-operation of the OSCE assistance-requesting and assistance-providing participating States, the remainder of the mélange rocket fuel component was removed from Kyrgyzstan, thus eliminating a major threat to human and environmental security. The SALW Portal, a new IT tool enabling a better overview and greater transparency of the Portfolio of OSCE Practical Assistance Projects on SALW and SCA, was established this year providing more details about the progress of the projects.

Another topic addressed during the year was the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and United Nations Security Council resolution 1540 (2004). The OSCE has supported the Comprehensive Review of the Status of Implementation of UNSCR 1540 by providing an OSCE contribution towards the Review, initially in writing in 2021, and subsequently by a statement in June 2022 held at the United Nations in New York.

The FSC Chairmanship of Belgium devoted a Security Dialogue to the topic of gender equality, touching upon the understanding of full, equal and meaningful participation of women within the politico-military security domain. Throughout the year, all FSC Chairmanships supported the 2022 OSCE-United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs Scholarship for Peace and Security training programme empowering young professionals, especially women, to engage meaningfully in policy-making, planning and implementation processes in arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation in the OSCE area.

One Security Dialogue on "Post-conflict rehabilitation and peace-building: lessons learned in the OSCE region and the way ahead", was held under the Azerbaijani Chairmanship. It aimed to consider and give a further impetus to post-conflict rehabilitation as part of the Organization's conflict cycle toolbox, but also to explore ways for their further operationalization and enhancement.

The FSC Chairmanships co-operated with the Polish OSCE Chairmanship and the Permanent Council on cross-dimensional issues of relevance to both bodies in line with the OSCE's concept of comprehensive and indivisible security. To this end, one joint meeting of the FSC and the Permanent Council was held during the Belgian FSC Chairmanship, on the topic of international humanitarian law.

In 2022, military information exchange continued at a high rate. Furthermore, an FSC decision on electronic military information exchange was adopted. The development of the OSCE Information Management and Reporting System (iMARS) reached an important milestone with provision of access to all participating States to take place before the end of the year.

In 2022, on average 27 per cent women and 73 per cent men participated in the FSC-related meetings (FSC plenaries, AIAM).

In conclusion, over the past year the FSC continued to serve as an important platform for dialogue and decision-making in the first dimension, providing participating States with a forum to discuss politico-military security issues and raise security concerns. Despite a difficult climate, unprecedented security situation and geopolitical tensions, the FSC continued to prove its value by maintaining an important platform for discussion.