

## THIRTIETH MEETING OF THE MINISTERIAL COUNCIL

### OPENING SESSION (OPEN)

1. Date: Thursday, 30 November 2023  
  
Opened: 10.20 a.m.  
Closed: 11.05 a.m.
  
2. Chairperson: H.E. Mr. Bujar Osmani, Minister of Foreign Affairs of North Macedonia, Chairman-in-Office of the OSCE

3. Subjects discussed – Statements – Decisions/documents adopted:

Agenda item 1: FORMAL OPENING

The Chairperson formally opened the Thirtieth Meeting of the OSCE Ministerial Council.

H.E. Mr. Dimitar Kovačevski, Prime Minister of North Macedonia, addressed the Thirtieth Meeting of the OSCE Ministerial Council.

Agenda item 2: ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

Chairperson

The agenda for the Thirtieth Meeting of the OSCE Ministerial Council was adopted and is annexed hereto (Annex 1).

Agenda item 3: ADDRESS BY THE OSCE CHAIRMAN-IN-OFFICE

H.E. Mr. Bujar Osmani, Minister of Foreign Affairs of North Macedonia, Chairman-in-Office of the OSCE, addressed the Meeting (MC.DEL/59/23)

Agenda item 4: ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE OSCE  
PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY

H.E. Ms. Pia Kauma, President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly,  
addressed the Meeting.

Agenda item 5: REPORT BY THE OSCE SECRETARY GENERAL

H.E. Ms. Helga Maria Schmid, Secretary General of the OSCE, addressed the  
Meeting (MC.GAL/3/23).

4. Next meeting:

Thursday, 30 November 2023, at 11.10 a.m., in the plenary hall and via video  
teleconference

## FIRST PLENARY SESSION (CLOSED)

1. Date: Thursday, 30 November 2023  
  
Opened: 11.10 a.m.  
Closed: 1.40 p.m.
  
2. Chairperson: H.E. Mr. Bujar Osmani, Minister of Foreign Affairs of North Macedonia, Chairman-in-Office of the OSCE

3. Subjects discussed – Statements – Decisions/documents adopted:

Agenda item 6: STATEMENTS BY HEADS OF DELEGATIONS

Uzbekistan, Spain-European Union (with the candidate countries Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Ukraine; the potential candidate country Georgia; and the European Free Trade Association country Iceland, member of the European Economic Area, as well as San Marino, in alignment) (MC.DEL/20/23), Finland (Annex 2), Sweden (MC.DEL/8/23 OSCE+), Germany (MC.DEL/3/23), United Kingdom (MC.DEL/1/23 OSCE+), United States of America (MC.DEL/2/23), Netherlands (MC.DEL/35/23 OSCE+), Luxembourg, Kazakhstan (MC.DEL/27/23 OSCE+), France (MC.DEL/6/23 OSCE+), Canada (MC.DEL/16/23), Ireland (MC.DEL/46/23), Hungary, Portugal (MC.DEL/30/23 OSCE+), Norway (MC.DEL/11/23), Russian Federation (MC.DEL/5/23), Denmark, Albania (MC.DEL/17/23 OSCE+), Switzerland (MC.DEL/18/23 OSCE+), Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Türkiye

4. Next meeting:

Thursday, 30 November 2023, at 3 p.m., in the plenary hall and via video teleconference

## SECOND PLENARY SESSION (CLOSED)

1. Date: Thursday, 30 November 2023  
  
Opened: 3.20 p.m.  
Closed: 6.25 p.m.
  
2. Chairperson: Ambassador Igor Djundev, Permanent Representative of North Macedonia to the OSCE  
Ms. Hilda Kolevska (North Macedonia)
  
3. Subjects discussed – Statements – Decisions/documents adopted:  
  
Agenda item 6: STATEMENTS BY HEADS OF DELEGATIONS (continued)  
  
Malta (MC.DEL/56/23 OSCE+), Croatia (MC.DEL/45/23 OSCE+), Italy (Annex 3), Czechia (Annex 4), San Marino (MC.DEL/4/23), Bulgaria (MC.DEL/41/23 OSCE+), Georgia (MC.DEL/44/23 OSCE+), Turkmenistan, Poland (Annex 5), Romania (Annex 6), Kyrgyzstan (MC.DEL/28/23 Restr.), Andorra (MC.DEL/37/23 OSCE+), Montenegro (MC.DEL/13/23 OSCE+), Serbia (MC.DEL/53/23 OSCE+), Slovenia (MC.DEL/40/23 OSCE+), Estonia (MC.DEL/33/23 OSCE+), Greece (MC.DEL/50/23 OSCE+), Holy See (MC.DEL/9/23 OSCE+), Monaco (MC.DEL/10/23 OSCE+), Armenia (Annex 7), Slovakia (MC.DEL/7/23 OSCE+), Tajikistan, Ukraine, Mongolia, Belgium (MC.DEL/58/23 OSCE+), Latvia (MC.DEL/61/23 OSCE+), Cyprus (MC.DEL/15/23), Azerbaijan (MC.DEL/39/23/Corr.1 OSCE+), Moldova (MC.DEL/49/23 OSCE+), Liechtenstein (MC.DEL/14/23), Iceland (MC.DEL/48/23 OSCE+), Belarus (MC.DEL/32/23), Japan (Partner for Co-operation) (Annex 8)
  
4. Next meeting:  
  
Friday, 1 December 2023, at 10 a.m., in the plenary hall and via video teleconference

### **THIRD PLENARY SESSION (CLOSED)**

1. Date: Friday, 1 December 2023

Opened: 10.05 a.m.

Suspended: 10.35 a.m.

2. Chairperson: Ms. Hilda Kolevska (North Macedonia)

3. Subjects discussed – Statements – Decisions/documents adopted:

Agenda item 6: STATEMENTS BY HEADS OF DELEGATIONS (continued)

Thailand (Partner for Co-operation), Australia (Partner for Co-operation),  
Israel (Partner for Co-operation) (MC.DEL/38/23 OSCE+), Republic of Korea  
(Partner for Co-operation), Afghanistan (Partner for Co-operation)

4. Next meeting:

Friday, 1 December 2023, at 2.20 p.m., in the plenary hall and via video  
teleconference

### THIRD PLENARY SESSION (CONTINUED) (CLOSED)

1. Date: Friday, 1 December 2023  
  
Resumed: 2.20 p.m.  
Closed: 4.20 p.m.
  
2. Chairperson: H.E. Mr. Bujar Osmani, Minister of Foreign Affairs of North Macedonia, Chairman-in-Office of the OSCE  
Ambassador Igor Djundev, Permanent Representative of North Macedonia to the OSCE

3. Subjects discussed – Statements – Decisions/documents adopted:

Agenda item 7: ADOPTION OF MINISTERIAL COUNCIL DOCUMENTS AND DECISIONS

Chairperson

The Chairperson announced that Decision No. 1/23 (MC.DEC/1/23) on the time and place of the next meeting of the OSCE Ministerial Council, the text of which is appended to this journal, had been adopted by the Ministerial Council on 25 January 2023 through a silence procedure.

**Decision:** The Ministerial Council adopted Decision No. 2/23 (MC.DEC/2/23) on the OSCE Chairmanship in the year 2024, the text of which is appended to this journal.

Malta (interpretative statement, see attachment 1 to the decision), United States of America (interpretative statement, see attachment 2 to the decision), Russian Federation, United Kingdom (interpretative statement, see attachment 3 to the decision), Norway (also on behalf of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Canada, Georgia, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Moldova, Monaco, Switzerland, Ukraine and the United Kingdom) (interpretative statement, see attachment 4 to the decision), Spain-European Union (with the candidate countries Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Ukraine; the potential candidate country Georgia; as well as Andorra, in alignment) (interpretative statement, see attachment 5 to the decision), Türkiye (Annex 9), Armenia (interpretative statement, see attachment 6 to the decision)

**Decision:** The Ministerial Council adopted Decision No. 3/23 (MC.DEC/3/23) on the extension of the appointment of the OSCE Secretary General, the text of which is appended to this journal.

United States of America (interpretative statement, see attachment 1 to the decision), Russian Federation (interpretative statement, see attachment 2 to the

decision), Spain-European Union (with the candidate countries Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Ukraine; the potential candidate country Georgia; as well as Andorra, in alignment) (interpretative statement, see attachment 3 to the decision), Canada (also on behalf of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Monaco, Montenegro, Norway, Switzerland and Ukraine) (interpretative statement, see attachment 4 to the decision), United Kingdom (interpretative statement, see attachment 5 to the decision)

**Decision:** The Ministerial Council adopted Decision No. 4/23 (MC.DEC/4/23) on the appointment of the Director of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, the text of which is appended to this journal.

United States of America (interpretative statement, see attachment 1 to the decision), Russian Federation (interpretative statement, see attachment 2 to the decision), Spain-European Union (with the candidate countries Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Ukraine; the potential candidate country Georgia; as well as Andorra, in alignment) (interpretative statement, see attachment 3 to the decision), Canada (also on behalf of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Monaco, Montenegro, Norway, Switzerland and Ukraine) (interpretative statement, see attachment 4 to the decision), United Kingdom (interpretative statement, see attachment 5 to the decision), Armenia (interpretative statement, see attachment 6 to the decision)

**Decision:** The Ministerial Council adopted Decision No. 5/23 (MC.DEC/5/23) on the extension of the appointment of the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities, the text of which is appended to this journal.

United States of America (interpretative statement, see attachment 1 to the decision), Russian Federation (interpretative statement, see attachment 2 to the decision), Spain-European Union (with the candidate countries Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Ukraine; the potential candidate country Georgia; as well as Andorra, in alignment) (interpretative statement, see attachment 3 to the decision), Canada (also on behalf of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Monaco, Montenegro, Norway, Switzerland and Ukraine) (interpretative statement, see attachment 4 to the decision), United Kingdom (interpretative statement, see attachment 5 to the decision)

**Decision:** The Ministerial Council adopted Decision No. 6/23 (MC.DEC/6/23) on the extension of the appointment of the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, the text of which is appended to this journal.

United States of America (interpretative statement, see attachment 1 to the decision), Russian Federation (interpretative statement, see attachment 2 to the decision), Spain-European Union (with the candidate countries Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Ukraine; the potential candidate country Georgia; as well as Andorra, in alignment) (interpretative statement, see attachment 3 to the decision), Canada

(also on behalf of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Monaco, Montenegro, Norway, Switzerland and Ukraine) (interpretative statement, see attachment 4 to the decision), United Kingdom (interpretative statement, see attachment 5 to the decision)

Agenda item 8: CLOSING STATEMENTS BY PARTICIPATING STATES

Spain-European Union (with the candidate countries Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Ukraine; the potential candidate country Georgia; and the European Free Trade Association countries Iceland and Liechtenstein, members of the European Economic Area, as well as Andorra, Monaco and San Marino, in alignment) (Annex 10), Luxembourg (also on behalf of Albania, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Montenegro, the Netherlands, North Macedonia, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Türkiye, the United Kingdom and the United States of America) (Annex 11), United Kingdom (Annex 12), Iceland (also on behalf of Bulgaria, Canada, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Sweden, Ukraine, the United Kingdom and the United States of America) (Annex 13), Sweden (also on behalf of Albania, Andorra, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Moldova, Monaco, Montenegro, the Netherlands, North Macedonia, Norway, Portugal, Romania, San Marino, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Switzerland, Ukraine, the United Kingdom and the United States of America) (Annex 14), Denmark (also on behalf of Albania, Andorra, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Estonia, Finland, 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, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Ukraine, the United Kingdom and the United States of America) (Annex 15), United States of America (Annex 16), United States of America (also on behalf of Albania, Andorra, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Moldova, Montenegro, the Netherlands, North Macedonia, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, San Marino, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain-European Union, Sweden, Switzerland, Ukraine and the United Kingdom) (Annex 17), Canada (Annex 18), Russian Federation (also on behalf of Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan) (Annex 19), Russian Federation (Annex 20), Türkiye



Agenda item 9: ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- (a) *Announcement of the distribution of the Skopje “Quadriga” statement on security challenges in the OSCE area: Chairperson (also on behalf of Poland, Malta and Finland) (Annex 21)*
- (b) *Letter from the Chairperson of the Forum for Security Co-operation to the Minister of Foreign Affairs of North Macedonia, Chairperson of the Thirtieth Meeting of the Ministerial Council of the OSCE (Annex 22)*

4. Next meeting:

Friday, 1 December 2023, at 4.20 p.m., in the plenary hall and via video teleconference

## **CLOSING SESSION (OPEN)**

1. Date: Friday, 1 December 2023  
  
Opened: 4.20 p.m.  
Closed: 4.35 p.m.
  
2. Chairperson: H.E. Mr. Bujar Osmani, Minister of Foreign Affairs of North Macedonia, Chairman-in-Office of the OSCE
  
3. Subjects discussed – Statements – Decisions/documents adopted:  
  
Agenda item 10: FORMAL CLOSURE (STATEMENTS BY THE CURRENT AND INCOMING CHAIRPERSONS-IN-OFFICE)  
  
Chairperson (North Macedonia) (MC.DEL/60/23), Malta (MC.DEL/57/23 OSCE+)  
  
The Chairperson formally declared the Thirtieth Meeting of the Ministerial Council closed.
  
4. Next meeting:  
  
To be decided



**Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe  
Ministerial Council  
Skopje 2023**

MC(30).JOUR  
30 November–1 December 2023  
Annex 1

Original: ENGLISH

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**First day of the Thirtieth Meeting**  
MC(30) Journal, Agenda item 2

**AGENDA FOR  
THE THIRTIETH MEETING OF THE  
OSCE MINISTERIAL COUNCIL**

(Skopje, 30 November and 1 December 2023)

1. Formal opening
2. Adoption of the agenda
3. Address by the OSCE Chairman-in-Office
4. Address by the President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly
5. Report by the OSCE Secretary General
6. Statements by heads of delegations
7. Adoption of Ministerial Council documents and decisions
8. Closing statements by participating States
9. Any other business
10. Formal closure (statements by the current and incoming Chairpersons-in-Office)



**Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe  
Ministerial Council  
Skopje 2023**

MC(30).JOUR  
30 November–1 December 2023  
Annex 2

Original: ENGLISH

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**First day of the Thirtieth Meeting**  
MC(30) Journal, Agenda item 6

**STATEMENT BY  
THE DELEGATION OF FINLAND**

Distinguished Chairperson, dear Bujar,  
Dear colleagues,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

While fully aligning with the statement of the European Union, I make the following remarks in my national capacity.

We meet in extremely serious circumstances as Russia continues its brutal and violent war of aggression in Ukraine. Russia is not only blatantly violating the UN Charter, but also breaking the core principles and commitments of the European security order. Russia has been trying to subvert these basic principles for years, including in Georgia in 2008 and in Ukraine since 2014. These principles are neither negotiable nor subject to revision or reinterpretation. Russia's notions of spheres of influence or zero-sum-game have no place in Europe in the 2020s.

War and destruction are Russia's choice. It is important to remember that Russia could end this war at any time, and Russia alone is responsible for where we are now: facing another winter of war in Europe.

And already now we can say that Russia, who attacked with a quick victory in mind, has failed to defeat Ukraine. Ukrainians' resilience and bravery are admirable.

Mr. Chairperson,

Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine has severely damaged the OSCE. I want to express my sincere appreciation and gratitude to you, dear Bujar, and to your team, for your staunch leadership when faced with this challenge. Your team has worked hard to safeguard the future of this Organization.

We are very pleased that this week a consensus was found, and grateful for the leadership shown by Malta by stepping up for the Chairmanship in 2024. We are ready to support you by all possible means as a participating State and as a Troika member.

Yet the disruptive policies of Russia continue to sabotage the functionality of the OSCE. We need a decision on the top four positions, all of them.

Mr. Chairperson,

The OSCE contributes to promoting and upholding the rule of law, democracy and human rights, as well as conflict prevention and peace mediation in the OSCE area.

We should make full use of the OSCE toolbox across all three dimensions, in autonomous institutions and in OSCE field operations.

Without the political will and commitment to the OSCE of all participating States, this Organization's potential is not fully realized. This Organization is only as effective as we, the participating States, allow it to be.

While our focus is on Russia's war against Ukraine, we should not lose sight of the valuable and concrete work that the Organization does across the OSCE area. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the OSCE staff, in Vienna, in the autonomous institutions and field operations across the OSCE area for the important work they carry out in difficult circumstances.

As Finland is preparing to assume the Chairmanship in 2025, I want to stress our commitment to strengthen the rules-based order through reconfirming the Helsinki principles and to safeguard the OSCE to serve its purpose, promoting security in the OSCE area.

Thank you.



**Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe  
Ministerial Council  
Skopje 2023**

MC(30).JOUR  
30 November–1 December 2023  
Annex 3

ENGLISH  
Original: ITALIAN

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**First day of the Thirtieth Meeting**  
MC(30) Journal, Agenda item 6

## **STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF ITALY**

Mr. Chairperson-in-Office,  
Esteemed colleagues,

In aligning myself with the statement made by the European Union, I should like first of all to congratulate North Macedonia for its efforts in leading the Organization during these difficult times marked by Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine and the continued Russian obstruction of the orderly functioning of the OSCE.

Despite this, the OSCE has remained faithful to its fundamental values and has continued to effectively implement its mandate to protect the security of our countries and citizens.

Italy reiterates its strongest condemnation of the war of aggression waged by Russia against Ukraine, with the complicity of Belarus – an unprovoked, unjustified and illegitimate war that for 21 long months has been causing death, destruction and unspeakable suffering to the Ukrainian people, with negative consequences for the security of the European continent and the entire OSCE area, and aggravating the economic vulnerabilities and food insecurity of many countries in the rest of the world.

We reaffirm our steadfast commitment to supporting the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine. A just and lasting peace can be achieved only through the immediate, complete and unconditional withdrawal of Russian forces and equipment from Ukraine's internationally recognized borders.

Italy is committed to safeguarding the OSCE as one of the pillars of the rules-based European security order. Thanks in part to our commitment, the Organization has shown great resilience since 24 February 2022 and has been able to adapt to the new circumstances.

We are very pleased that it proved possible to reach consensus on entrusting Malta with the OSCE Chairmanship for 2024, so as to ensure the truly vital function of the Organization's leadership during the year that will begin in just a month's time. We assure our Maltese friends of our complete and unwavering support as they carry out the delicate task ahead of them. At the same time, we regret the unjustified opposition of some

participating States to Estonia's valid candidature and thank it for the high sense of responsibility that it has demonstrated.

Very good work has been done by the Secretary General and the heads of the autonomous institutions in conformity with their respective mandates in circumstances that were indeed difficult both in political and in organizational terms. We sincerely thank them for their excellent work and very much hope that all their mandates will be renewed so as to ensure the continuity of functions that the Organization needs.

Mr. Chairperson,

It is undeniable that the OSCE is going through a difficult and sensitive phase politically and in terms of its functioning. The consensus rule is being abused and instrumentalized, without taking into account what could be irreparable consequences for the proper functioning of the Organization.

We note with great regret that it has not been possible to approve a Unified Budget since 2021. The OSCE must be able to count on adequate financial resources.

As we look ahead to the 50th anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act in 2025, I should like to reaffirm Italy's unwavering support for the OSCE and the fundamental principles and commitments on which it is based. These principles and commitments are non-negotiable and not open to revision or reinterpretation.

The OSCE also possesses an *acquis*, built up over more than 50 years of work, on issues that will be crucial at the end of the conflict, such as confidence-building measures, arms control and, above all, the promotion of human rights, with a view to a holistic principle of security.

Italy, which is among the leading contributors to the OSCE in financial terms and in terms of personnel, will continue to commit itself with conviction and consistency to the common good of the Organization. We strongly urge all participating States to do the same.



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**First day of the Thirtieth Meeting**  
MC(30) Journal, Agenda item 6

**STATEMENT BY  
THE DELEGATION OF CZECHIA**

Mr. Chairperson,

I align myself with the statement made by the European Union. In addition, I would like to make the following remarks in my national capacity.

This is the second time the Ministerial Council convenes while a full-fledged war is raging in Europe. As we speak, Russia is waging a war of aggression against another participating State. Russia must abide by international law and withdraw its military forces from Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders.

The OSCE finds itself in a crisis. This crisis is caused by Russia's disregard for the most fundamental OSCE principles, as well as its policy of deliberate obstruction of the OSCE decision-making by misusing the consensus rule of the Organization.

We have gathered here in Skopje to ensure that the OSCE endures as an organization institutionalizing the best practice in conflict prevention, promoting human rights and democratic values, and advancing economic development and environmental protection. The OSCE should be preserved as a valuable platform for dialogue across our region.

The experience with the process of selection of the new Chairmanship has been painful. I very much regret that Estonia's candidacy was blocked by Russia and Belarus.

In this situation, we welcomed Malta's readiness to take on this challenging task. I support Malta's candidacy. Czechia will continue to stand side by side with the upcoming Chairmanship in defence of the OSCE values.

I urge the Ministerial Council to make also other necessary institutional decisions. I have full confidence in the Secretary General as well as the heads of all three autonomous institutions, who have all been doing tremendous work in highly demanding circumstances, and I am convinced that their mandates should be renewed.

The OSCE has an important role in assisting Ukraine in dealing with the consequences of the war and its impact on the lives of its citizens, the economy, and the



environment. Czechia is a proud voluntary contributor to the Support Programme for Ukraine.

So far, we have made available 240,000 euros for the OSCE activities in support of Ukraine. That also includes our latest pledge in support of the office of the newly appointed Special Representative for Ukraine.

I also support the OSCE efforts to document Russia's war crimes and human rights violations caused by its aggression against Ukraine. The Moscow Mechanism proves to be a very useful instrument to this end. Russia must and will be held fully accountable for the whole spectrum of its crimes.

The OSCE must remain functional in all three dimensions. It is important that events like the Prague Forum on the Economic and Environmental Dimension and the Warsaw Human Dimension Conference took place, in spite of Russia's obstructions. However, regular OSCE meetings should take place as mandated. They must be the rule, not the exception.

I would like to see the OSCE values upheld across the whole OSCE area. Georgia's territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders must be respected.

In the same vein, we hope in progress towards a sustainable and lasting peace between Armenia and Azerbaijan. The rights and security of Karabakh Armenians, including those who wish to return to their homes, need to be ensured.

I would like to close my remarks by expressing my gratitude to the current Chairmanship of North Macedonia. Minister Osmani, you have provided strong leadership in very tough times, thank you.

Mr. Chairperson, I would like to ask for this statement to be attached to the journal of today's meeting.



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**First day of the Thirtieth Meeting**  
MC(30) Journal, Agenda item 6

## **STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF POLAND**

Poland wants to thank North Macedonia for bravely steering the OSCE ship through stormy waters and our Secretary General for her efforts to preserve the ship intact.

The OSCE is irreplaceable as our common good. We share responsibility for its past and for its future. However, we need to remember that our mission is to protect the OSCE's content not the packaging.

Poland has been supportive of all decisions that would help to continue the valuable work of the OSCE. Therefore, we condemn Russia's constant blocking of the processes aimed at restoring the Organization's financial security and basic functioning.

Let me make a few points which Poland considers lessons learned from our experience and vital for long-lasting stability in the OSCE area.

First, I would like to express my deep sadness that we are meeting at another OSCE Ministerial Council with the ongoing Russian aggression in the background. The Skopje Ministerial Council meeting needs to mark our solidarity with the Ukrainian people who, day after day, fall victim to the deadly aggression of Putin's regime. Russia bears full responsibility for the crimes committed in Ukraine and will face its consequences. Individual perpetrators must be prosecuted before the appropriate courts. We have to maintain our firm stance on good and evil. The OSCE activities must be focused on Ukraine, including through further practical assistance within the framework of the Support Programme for Ukraine.

Second, no lasting security architecture will be possible as long as the war continues and the Helsinki principles are violated. All the Russian troops have to leave the internationally recognized borders of Ukraine immediately. As long as the invasion lasts, there is no room for any "business" with the aggressor.

Third, we have to continue investing in human rights and fundamental freedoms. Security without them will not work. We call it "comprehensive security". This is why the OSCE's human dimension is so important.

Finally, we must not fall into the trap of accepting Moscow's cynical blackmail to appease on issues of primary importance and long-time consequences. We must not allow the

Russian war to be named an “operation” or “crisis”, a blockage, “lack of consensus”, and “business as usual” to be put above the *acquis* developed over many years.

Let me conclude by wishing the incoming Chairmanship perseverance in upholding the principles, and – hence – the relevance of the OSCE. The latter will only become possible when the former is prioritized.



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**First day of the Thirtieth Meeting**  
MC(30) Journal, Agenda item 6

**STATEMENT BY  
THE DELEGATION OF ROMANIA**

Mr. Chairperson,

Romania fully subscribes to the statement of the European Union. In addition, we would like to make the following remarks in a national capacity.

We join other speakers in thanking North Macedonia, H.E. Minister Osmani, for hosting us today, as well as for his and his entire team's tremendous efforts in steering our Organization during these extraordinary times. We welcome the principled, firm position of North Macedonia regarding Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine and for continuing to ensure that the Organization is bringing its contribution to addressing its multiple consequences.

Mr. Chairperson,

We are facing an unprecedented security and humanitarian crisis, caused by Russia's full-scale war of aggression against Ukraine, in blatant violation of the basic principles of international law, the UN Charter and OSCE commitments. Once more, we strongly condemn this unprovoked, unjustified war of aggression and the continuous attacks on Ukrainian civilian infrastructure, including on the ports at the Danube, close to Ukraine's border with Romania. We reiterate our firm call on the Russian Federation to immediately and unconditionally stop this unprovoked and unjustified aggression and withdraw all its military forces and equipment from the entire territory of Ukraine, within its internationally recognized borders. We also reiterate our call on Belarus to stop enabling the Russian aggression and to abide by its international obligations.

Deliberate attacks on civilian infrastructure and killing of innocent civilians by the Russian Federation are horrendous. They constitute blatant violations of international humanitarian law and must stop immediately. We are determined to make those responsible of all the heinous crimes committed in Ukraine, including war crimes and crimes against humanity, accountable for their acts. Romania is joining all efforts of the international community in holding those responsible accountable, including within the OSCE, by joining the participating States that invoked the Moscow Mechanism.

Romania will continue to stand with Ukraine. Together with all European Union and NATO member States, Romania has been supporting Ukraine and the Ukrainian people

affected by Russia's war of aggression, by providing humanitarian aid, and macro-financial and military assistance. We have been providing shelter, food, medical assistance, access to education and the labour market to all those fleeing the war and entering Romania, and we will continue to do so. Our support remains solid, for as long as it takes.

We have been witnessing the incredible resilience of the Ukrainian people in defending their country and resisting in front of the aggressor. The people of Ukraine are also fighting for their European future: thus, the granting of the status of candidate country to Ukraine is of historical importance, together with the recent recommendation by the European Commission to open the accession negotiations.

Mr. Chairperson,

As Russia continues its blatant war of aggression, it is important to address and alleviate its consequences which are felt beyond Ukraine's borders. We welcome the efforts of the OSCE to increase the resilience of the Republic of Moldova, including in the field of combating corruption and money laundering, combating trafficking in human beings or building democratic institutions. Let me underline that Romania will continue to provide all relevant support to the Republic of Moldova, to strengthen its resilience in the face of destabilizing activities by external actors and to support its European accession path. Romania firmly supports a comprehensive, peaceful, and sustainable settlement of the conflict in the Republic of Moldova, based on the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Moldova within its internationally recognized borders and without affecting the European perspective of the country. In this context, let me reiterate once again the importance of withdrawing Russian troops and ammunition from the territory of the Republic of Moldova, in accordance with international law and OSCE commitments. In this context, we expect also the mandate of the OSCE Mission to be extended in accordance with the regular procedure.

Ambassador Viorel Moşanu, Special Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office for the South Caucasus, is investing professionalism, energy, and dedication in supporting the Geneva International Discussions. We reiterate our support for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Georgia.

This year, another humanitarian crisis unfolded in the OSCE area. We continue to closely monitor the difficult situation on the ground. We reaffirm our support for the sovereignty, inviolability of borders and territorial integrity of Armenia and Azerbaijan. We also encourage Armenia and Azerbaijan to continue their diplomatic engagement, with the support of the EU, in order to find comprehensive solutions to all outstanding issues.

The impact of the war is felt beyond Ukraine, as Russia recklessly exploited energy and food as a weapon of war. Russia bears responsibility for the global food security crisis it has provoked by instrumentalizing food in its war against Ukraine. Romania, together with all European Union Member States, will continue to support the timely and stable delivery of Ukrainian agricultural products to global markets. More than 30 million tons of grain transited through our country.

Mr. Chairperson,

This unprecedented security crisis has affected also the OSCE as a whole. By abusing the consensus rule, the Russian Federation has been systematically hampering the well-functioning of the Organization, limiting its ability to act on the ground and depriving it of much-needed financial resources. Russia is the sole responsible for the current state of the Organization.

But the Organization has proven its resilience. We warmly thank the previous Polish Chairmanship and current Chairmanship of North Macedonia, the Secretary General, the field operations and the autonomous institutions that have kept the Organization operational and have provided valuable support to its participating States and its people. Thus, the Organization has continued to provide valuable support to Ukraine, through: the Support Programme for Ukraine (to which also Romania is a donor) and the Special Representative, as well as through the work of the autonomous institutions – the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) (monitoring the human rights situation or strengthening the capacity of civil society and human rights defenders to act) and the Representative on Freedom of the Media (with its watchdog function, continuing to monitor media freedom and the safety of journalists on the ground). This is a testimony of the importance of our Organization, of its institutions, and the reason for all of us to make further, strengthened efforts to ensure its continuous functioning.

In this difficult context, we welcome that consensus has been reached on the next Chairmanship of the OSCE and we are grateful to Malta for assuming this responsibility. However, let me state that Estonia was perfectly able to lead the Organization, defend our common principles and commitments, and ensure that the Organization remains relevant on the ground and credible on the international arena. The Russian Federation has never provided a solid argument why this would not be the case.

We also need to ensure continuity at the top management level of the Organization and thus support the extension of the mandates for the current incumbents of the four top positions: the Secretary General, the ODIHR Director, the Representative on Freedom of the Media and the High Commissioner on National Minorities. We are grateful for their tireless work and that they stand ready to continue in these unpredictable times, with limited resources at their disposal. Let me use this opportunity to reconfirm our support for the mandates and autonomy of the institutions.

We also believe that the Organization should be provided with adequate resources and we have supported the Chairmanship in its assiduous efforts to ensure it, by exploring different avenues. We also provide voluntary contributions to several projects of the Organization.

Mr. Chairperson,

We need a robust and principled OSCE that continues to bring its contribution in maintaining peace and security, to hold Russia to account for its aggression against a sovereign State, and to deliver on the ground, for its participating States and its people. We will support Malta in their efforts to contribute to this end.

Thank you.



**Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe  
Ministerial Council  
Skopje 2023**

MC(30).JOUR  
30 November–1 December 2023  
Annex 7

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**First day of the Thirtieth Meeting**  
MC(30) Journal, Agenda item 6

**STATEMENT BY  
THE DELEGATION OF ARMENIA**

Distinguished colleagues,

At the outset, I would like to thank North Macedonia's OSCE Chairmanship for leading this Organization during the last year. Indeed, it was not an easy task, as the OSCE, which still remains the biggest security organization in the world, is rapidly declining as once duly adopted and well-elaborated mandates and commitments are totally disregarded.

This process started several years ago when the OSCE failed to implement its core tasks – early warning and conflict prevention. Unfortunately, this process will continue unless there is no common understanding that violation of international law in any part of the world shall be unequivocally condemned and not tolerated, otherwise it creates a sense of impunity becoming the new normal in other parts of the world. Regrettably, the OSCE area of responsibility is not an exclusion.

In the South Caucasus the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, the root causes of which were hatred and xenophobia in its various forms and the existential threat to the people who wanted to live in freedom and dignity in their ancestral homeland, reached its final stage this year. After a nine-month-long inhuman siege, on 19 September Azerbaijan launched yet another large-scale military offensive against the people of Nagorno-Karabakh which resulted in mass forced displacement of its indigenous population. At this point in time, we can state that in the silent agreement of the international community Azerbaijan has reached its long-standing goal – to get the territory of Nagorno-Karabakh without its Armenian population.

However, even after having this done the claims of the Azerbaijani side were not halted. Now the entire sovereign territory of the Republic of Armenia has become the target of our neighbour. This, coupled with continuous hatred, military rhetoric, use of force and threats of use of force, refusal to come to the meetings organized by various international actors, including the United States of America and the European Union, illustrates that this country is not sincerely interested in peace and stability in our region.

Distinguished colleagues,

Despite this humanitarian disaster in Nagorno-Karabakh, Armenia remains committed to opening a new era of peace in the South Caucasus and believes that it is still possible. To turn this possibility into a reality, we need the reciprocally genuine engagement of Azerbaijan and the strong support of international actors to our efforts, which are based on well-elaborated and well-known principles. These principles that were widely discussed and admitted or at least not rejected by the Azerbaijani side include:

- Mutual recognition of territorial integrity based on the 1991 Alma-Ata Declaration and without any further ambiguity;
- Delimitation of the State border between Armenia and Azerbaijan based on the freshest and legitimate maps – USSR General Staff maps of 1974–1978;
- Opening of all transport and economic communications with full respect of the countries’ sovereignty and jurisdiction, as well as based on the principles of equality and reciprocity.

The Armenian side, reaffirming its commitment to the above-mentioned principles and demonstrating its readiness to embark upon practical steps, has recently presented the concept of a connectivity project which we called “Crossroads of Peace”. This ambitious project is aimed at connecting east with west and north with south and through regional co-operation to create conditions for strengthening economic and cultural ties, soften contradictions and foster better connectivity and political dialogue between the countries of our region.

In this regard the opening of the Armenia-Turkey border is also of crucial importance. As you might be aware, we have reached agreement to open the land border for third country citizens and Armenian and Turkish citizens holding diplomatic passports, which was reconfirmed by my counterpart, Minister Fidan, at our bilateral meeting on 23 October; even concrete timing was indicated meaning the upcoming weeks, and we hope that in the nearest future we will implement this first, but quite tangible step.

Madam Chairperson,

There are also a number of humanitarian issues on Armenia-Azerbaijan normalization that cannot be ignored. The release of all Armenian detainees, including the ones imprisoned after 19 September, co-operation in addressing the fate of missing persons, and protection of Armenian cultural property in and around Nagorno-Karabakh can pave the way to long-lasting, just and dignified peace.

In conclusion, I would like to stress that Armenia as a responsible member of the OSCE has proved on numerous occasions its devotion to regional and global peace and will continue to take steps to that end. And once again, I reiterate that Armenia remains ready for negotiations and we need Azerbaijan to stop rejecting the proposals of facilitators to meet and finalize the peace treaty. To ensure this goal we need the genuine efforts of all interested



parties and the international community as a whole to turn the page of violence in the South Caucasus and strengthen the international rules-based order.

Thank you.



**Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe  
Ministerial Council  
Skopje 2023**

MC(30).JOUR  
30 November–1 December 2023  
Annex 8

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**First day of the Thirtieth Meeting**  
MC(30) Journal, Agenda item 6

**STATEMENT BY  
THE DELEGATION OF JAPAN**

Mr. Chairperson,  
Distinguished ministers,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

On behalf of the Government of Japan, I would like to express my sincere appreciation to the OSCE and the Chairmanship country, North Macedonia, for their efforts in the preparation for the OSCE Ministerial Council meeting. I am also honoured to attend this Council as the Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs on behalf of Japan, which serves as an Asian Partner of the OSCE.

The international community faces complex and various challenges.

A few weeks ago, the G7 Foreign Ministers issued a joint Foreign Ministers' Statement, where the ministers of the G7 countries concurred on their recognition of the situation surrounding Israel and Palestine on the occasion of the G7 Foreign Ministers' Meeting in Tokyo. It is essential to realize humanitarian pauses to secure humanitarian access, to comply with international law including international humanitarian law, and to realize peace in the Middle East based on a "two-State solution" from a mid- to long-term perspective.

Hostages were released several times based on the deal between Israel and Hamas. Both sides extended the humanitarian pause twice so far.

Japan welcomes the continuous implementation of the deal. It is important to steadily implement the deal and continue the pause over a longer period of time. The G7 Foreign Ministers announced that they support the further extension of this pause and future pauses as needed to enable assistance to be scaled up, and to facilitate the release of all hostages.

I attended the International Humanitarian Conference for the Civilian Population in Gaza, and I keenly felt the need of de-escalating the humanitarian situation on the ground as soon as possible and the importance of co-operation with other countries and international organizations for this purpose.

The Government of Japan disbursed an emergency grant aid of 10 million US dollars in response to the deteriorating humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip in the areas of food, water and health care. In addition to the above, we are preparing to make additional contributions totalling approximately 65 million US dollars to Palestine.

Even in the growing tension situation in the Middle East, we should never forget Ukraine. Russia's aggression against Ukraine is an outrageous act that shakes the very foundation of international order. Japan once again strongly condemns Russia. Japan's attitude to impose severe sanctions against Russia and to provide strong support for Ukraine remains unchanged.

Japan has pledged approximately 7.6 billion US dollars in total to support Ukraine, and will steadily implement this support. As was agreed upon during the telephone talks in November between Prime Minister Kishida of Japan and President Zelenskyy of Ukraine, Japan will hold the Japan-Ukraine Conference for Promotion of Economic Reconstruction in Tokyo next February. Japan will accelerate its effort to support Ukraine in its recovery and reconstruction through the co-operation between both public and private sectors.

It is also important to support Ukraine on the diplomatic front. Japan will continue its efforts to advance the process of a Peace Formula together with international partners.

Turning our eyes to the Indo-Pacific, a unilateral attempt to change the status quo by force continues, or even is strengthened in the East and South China Seas. Besides, North Korea is intensifying its nuclear and missile activities on 21 November, which is a clear violation of United Nations Security Council resolutions.

Japan, as an Asian Partner country of the OSCE, would like to emphasize that unilateral changes to the status quo by force cannot be tolerated anywhere in the world, and that the security of the Euro-Atlantic and Indo-Pacific are inseparable.

Given such an international environment, let me introduce the co-operation between Japan and the OSCE. Japan has been the longest-standing Asian Partner of the OSCE. We have contributed to the OSCE's concrete projects for the enhancement of democratization and the promotion of regional stability.

For example, Japan has dispatched experts to the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine, and has provided financial assistance to strengthen the border management capacity of Central Asia and Afghanistan. Japan's such co-operation projects are based on the recognition that the security of any corner of the world is inseparable.

Japan will continue to further strengthen its co-operation with the OSCE, which takes a comprehensive approach to the security situation, including political, military, economic and environmental, as well as human rights issues.

Mr. Chairperson,  
Distinguished ministers,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

Japan will host the OSCE Asian Conference next year. While the international community is facing an inflection point in history, Japan will further strengthen co-operation with the OSCE to uphold a free and open international order based on the rule of law, in order to lead the world toward co-operation rather than division and confrontation.



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**Second day of the Thirtieth Meeting**  
MC(30) Journal, Agenda item 7

**STATEMENT BY  
THE DELEGATION OF TÜRKIYE**

Thank you Mr. Chairperson, thank you Minister Osmani, also for your very warm hospitality in Skopje.

Allow me to thank you and North Macedonia for shouldering the OSCE Chairmanship this year and to commend you for your very hard work.

Let me also commend Secretary General Schmid and the four top leaders of this Organization, and the staff. We look forward to continuing to work with you in the time ahead.

Türkiye appreciates and congratulates Malta for stepping forward as the Chairmanship for 2024.

We are meeting once again under extraordinary circumstances for international peace and security.

The tragic war in Ukraine has been continuing, for soon to be two years now.

The devastation, destruction and human suffering in Ukraine have been immense.

The war's regional and global fallout is also on the rise.

We have all been negatively affected by this war.

Let me reaffirm, once again, our principled position in support of Ukraine's territorial integrity and sovereignty, as well as our commitment to upholding dialogue and diplomacy for a political settlement.

Since we last met in the reinforced format in late September, we have been witnessing immense devastation, destruction and human suffering in another part of the world, not too far away from the OSCE area.

Unfortunately, on and after 7 October, we have been shaken to the core because of the massive loss of civilian lives. After an initial high ground, Israel has been indiscriminately

targeting and heavily attacking civilians and all kinds of civilian infrastructure, including hospitals in Gaza.

Humanity has not seen such a massive loss of civilian lives, mostly women and children, in such a short period of time in recent history. The United Nations itself has never lost such a huge number of civilian personnel in an armed conflict.

As North Macedonia's Chairmanship motto says, "It's about people". Yes, it should be. Not just my kind of people but all kinds of people.

Excellencies,  
Dear colleagues,

It is not an overstatement to say that the OSCE has been going through the most challenging period in its history.

There have been difficult times in the past as well, times when it was not easy to take decisions.

However, it never got to the situation as is the case now.

Yet, the Organization remains important as the most inclusive platform for comprehensive security and co-operation in Europe.

This platform, as is, needs to be preserved.

If we cannot pull the Organization out of the difficult state it is in, then what hope can we entertain for co-operative security anywhere, any time? Europe, from the Atlantic to the Urals, would be locked into confrontation, even conflict. No transparency, no arms control, no confidence and security. It is time for reflection and action.

Reform should be part and parcel of our work.

I believe the old but very relevant concept of co-operative security, which underwrote the post-Cold War security architecture and discourse in Europe, should be given a fresh opportunity in 2024 and 2025.

If there was no OSCE today, we would not be able to create it. It is such a unique and valuable construct. It is against this background that my country, Türkiye, would ask fellow participating States to seek consensus, but also compromise and vision to strengthen this Organization and open a new chapter for co-operative security in Europe.

To facilitate debate, we will devote attention to this topic in the context of the upcoming Antalya Diplomacy Forum in March, in the very forum which brought Ukraine and Russia together for the first time in 2022 after the beginning of the war.

Thank you for your attention.



**Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe  
Ministerial Council  
Skopje 2023**

MC(30).JOUR  
30 November–1 December 2023  
Annex 10

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**Second day of the Thirtieth Meeting**  
MC(30) Journal, Agenda item 8

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

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

The European Union expresses its gratitude to the Chairman-in-Office, Foreign Minister Osmani, and the 2023 OSCE Chairmanship of North Macedonia for their hospitality in Skopje, and for the manner they steered the Organization during turbulent times. We would also like to pay tribute to Ambassador Igor Djundev, and his dedicated team in Vienna for their tireless efforts throughout this past year, marked by continuous challenges for the OSCE area and for the Organization itself, stemming from Russia's ongoing illegal, unprovoked and unjustified war of aggression against Ukraine. We are particularly grateful to the Chairmanship of North Macedonia for keeping this aggression high on the Organization's agenda. The EU also expresses its appreciation to the Chairmanship for the dedicated efforts in fostering consensus on pressing matters for the OSCE's functionality.

We welcome the decisions by the Ministerial Council on the Chairmanship of Malta in 2024 and on the extension of mandates for the Secretary General and the heads of the three autonomous institutions. We look forward to working with and supporting Malta in its goal to lead the Organization and to ensure that the OSCE contributes to addressing the unprecedented challenges to European security we currently face.

We reaffirm our strong 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 effectiveness of the Organization and maintain its ability to act under these difficult circumstances and allow for its effective functioning across all three dimensions, including by providing adequate financial resources. 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 call upon all participating States to recognize the importance of providing the OSCE with continuity under strong leadership, particularly when its principles, commitments and values are more crucial than ever for our common security.

For a second consecutive year, Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine marked the Ministerial Council meeting. Just like last year, however, Russia did not succeed in its

attempts to misuse this forum to legitimize its war of aggression and deflect its responsibility for it. Russia's groundless claims and false accusations were once again met with resounding condemnation of its brutal war of aggression against Ukraine as a blatant violation of international law, including the UN Charter, and OSCE principles and commitments, as well as the most critical threat to our common security. Against this background, the continuous overwhelming support among the participating States for Ukraine's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders underlined the non-negotiable and irrevocable nature of the core norms, principles and commitments that lie at the heart of European security.

In upholding these norms and principles, the European Union and its Member States remain determined to stand by Ukraine and its people for as long as it takes. On the occasion of the 90th anniversary of the Holodomor events, we reiterate our grave concern about the repetition of the reprehensible actions of the past, with Russia once again using food as a weapon, with severe and tragic consequences for many countries worldwide.

For a second consecutive Ministerial Council meeting the call for ensuring accountability for all heinous acts committed as part of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, including for the crime of aggression, resounded loud and clear. We also took a good note of the recommendations of the Civic Solidarity Platform parallel conference in this regard, as well as of the conclusions of the side event initiated by Ukraine under the title: "In the shadow of Russia's occupation: How to ensure accountability and civilian detainees' return". In this context, we will continue to demand the immediate release by Russia of all individuals unlawfully deprived of their liberty, including the three arbitrarily detained OSCE staff members. Russia must ensure that all Ukrainians in Russian captivity are treated in full compliance with international humanitarian law and international human rights law.

Grounded on our common OSCE commitments and our renewed determination to implement them, we will continue to use, preserve and even enhance its tools and assets in all three dimensions of security.

To conclude, the crisis we confront is not a flaw in the common rules and underlying principles of the European security order. It is not a failure of the OSCE. It is the failure of one participating State, actively supported by another one, to abide by those rules and principles. We call on Russia to immediately stop its war of aggression against Ukraine, and completely and unconditionally withdraw all its forces and military equipment from the entire territory of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders. We can achieve a common, indivisible security space built on trust and co-operation and at peace when all 57 participating States uphold universal values, principles, and rules they all have willingly agreed upon.

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

The candidate countries North Macedonia<sup>1</sup>, Montenegro<sup>1</sup>, Albania<sup>1</sup>, Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, and Bosnia and Herzegovina<sup>1</sup>, the potential candidate country Georgia,

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



and the EFTA countries Iceland and Liechtenstein, members of the European Economic Area, as well as Andorra, Monaco, and San Marino align themselves with this statement.



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**Second day of the Thirtieth Meeting**  
MC(30) Journal, Agenda item 8

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

Mr. Chairperson,

This statement is delivered on behalf of NATO Allies and the invitee Sweden.

Peace in the OSCE area has been shattered. Russia's illegal, unjustifiable, and unprovoked war of aggression against Ukraine, which we condemn in the strongest terms, gravely undermines the Euro-Atlantic security order. It is a blatant violation of international law, including the UN Charter, and contravenes OSCE principles and commitments, such as those contained in the Helsinki Final Act.

We reaffirm our unwavering solidarity with Ukraine. We will never recognize Russia's attempted illegal and illegitimate annexations, including of Crimea. We fully support Ukraine's rights to self-defence and to choose its own security arrangements. Ukraine's future is in NATO. We remain steadfast in stepping up political and practical support to Ukraine for as long as it takes. We welcome other OSCE participating States supporting Ukraine.

There can be no impunity for Russia's abuses of human rights and violations of international humanitarian law, including war crimes, such as the forced deportation of children. We furthermore condemn attacks on energy infrastructure, especially during winter. Russia's war has also profoundly harmed the environment, nuclear safety, global energy and food security. We are working to ensure Ukrainian grain exports continue and actively support international efforts to alleviate the global food crisis.

We urge all countries not to provide any kind of assistance to Russia's aggression. Belarus's support has been instrumental as it continues to provide its territory and infrastructure to enable Russia's attacks on Ukraine. Belarus must end its complicity with Russia and return to compliance with international law. We condemn Russia's announced deployment of nuclear weapons and nuclear-capable systems in Belarus.

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, intensified hybrid actions, including through proxies, and irresponsible nuclear rhetoric, as well as its use of force to pursue its political goals, undermine the rules-based international order.

We do not seek confrontation and we pose no threat to Russia. Russia must halt its aggressive behaviour and fully comply with international law. We remain willing to keep open channels of communication with Moscow to manage and mitigate risks, prevent escalation and increase transparency, including at the OSCE. We will significantly strengthen deterrence and defence, enhance our resilience and remain committed to supporting our partners to counter malign influence and aggression.

Russia has instigated conflicts in the OSCE area and inhibited efforts to resolve them. We call on Russia to end its occupation of Georgia's regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia and withdraw all its forces and materiel 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.

Russia continues to demonstrate disregard for arms control. We condemn Russia's withdrawal from the landmark Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE Treaty). As a consequence, Allied States Parties intend to suspend the operation of the CFE Treaty for as long as necessary. We remain united in our commitment to effective conventional arms control as a key element of Euro-Atlantic security. This complements the Alliance's deterrence and defence posture that Allies have decided to further strengthen.

Russia must immediately stop its war of aggression, and completely and unconditionally withdraw from Ukraine. We are committed to achieving a just and lasting peace that upholds the UN Charter's principles, and therefore welcome President Zelenskyy's Peace Formula.

In light of the unprecedented challenges the Organization faces, we reiterate the key importance of the OSCE as a unique forum for dialogue and advancing comprehensive security. We will continue to support the OSCE's work across all three dimensions of security, and advocate for its effective and unimpeded functioning, including the independent institutions and field missions.

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



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**Second day of the Thirtieth Meeting**  
MC(30) Journal, Agenda item 8

**STATEMENT BY  
THE DELEGATION OF THE UNITED KINGDOM**

On behalf of the United Kingdom, I want to begin by thanking you and your committed team. Thank you for your warm hospitality here in Skopje. And in this difficult year, thank you for your outstanding leadership. And to the Secretary General, dear Helga, our deepest appreciation and gratitude to you, the heads of the autonomous institutions and the hard-working staff of the OSCE.

As Lord Cameron said this week, the United Kingdom will stand with Ukraine for as long as it takes. We will continue to give political, economic, military and moral support to ensure Ukraine prevails, to secure the lasting peace that the Ukrainian people deserve and the security that our continent demands, in the face of such unfettered, unjustifiable aggression.

As the overwhelming majority of members of this Organization have continued to reiterate this week, Russia – supported by the Belarusian regime – is solely responsible for the illegal, full-scale invasion of Ukraine. To Russia we say simply this – your actions, your violations of the United Nations Charter and the principles of the Helsinki Final Act are indefensible.

As the overwhelming majority have expressed here in Skopje – these principles – of sovereignty and territorial integrity – matter; this Organization matters; and that when it matters, we have shown once again that we will stand together to defend both.

Yesterday, we heard Mr. Lavrov say that the OSCE was on the “brink of the abyss”. A comment of little value from the representative of a country which invaded Georgia in 2008, illegally annexed Crimea in 2014 and launched a full-scale invasion of Ukraine last year. A comment of little surprise, given the OSCE’s crucial role in holding Russia to account, including through the Moscow Mechanism. A comment that this Ministerial Council meeting shows has fooled no one.

Mr. Chairperson, what we have shown is that we need the OSCE. In a turbulent region, the OSCE’s democracy, rule of law and fundamental rights institutions are globally renowned, holding nations to account. OSCE field missions are deployed across the Balkans and Central Asia, working with host governments to deliver long-term change.

The United Kingdom is delighted to have agreed on a new Chairmanship, and welcomes extending the mandates for the Secretary General and heads of the autonomous institutions. We thank them for stepping up at such short notice to ensure the continued efficacy of the OSCE. You can all count on the United Kingdom's full support. Mr. Chairperson, as we all know, the OSCE still needs an agreed and appropriate budget. We look forward to returning to Vienna in the spirit of consensus in order to finalize this important issue.

Mr. Chairperson, as we look to 2024, we will continue to stand with Ukraine. We will continue to stand up for the OSCE. And we will continue to stand for the foundations and values of our collective European security. That is our choice and it is why we are here.



**Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe  
Ministerial Council  
Skopje 2023**

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30 November–1 December 2023  
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**Second day of the Thirtieth Meeting**  
MC(30) Journal, Agenda item 8

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

Mr. Chairperson,  
Honourable ministers,  
Madam Secretary General of the OSCE,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

Iceland wishes to wholeheartedly thank Mr. Bujar Osmani and our hosts of North Macedonia for leading our Organization through these incredibly challenging times. We are grateful as well to our Secretary General, heads of the OSCE institutions and OSCE staff.

We also wish to thank Malta for taking on the immense responsibility of chairing our Organization in 2024, at the eleventh hour, and we assure Minister Ian Borg of Iceland's full support.

Mr. Chairperson,

The OSCE was founded to protect peace and security, and foster justice and co-operation.

And for a long time, our Organization has been a strong platform for dialogue, diplomacy, co-operation, and trust-building in the OSCE area. It has laid the foundations for democracy, rule of law, human rights, and peaceful coexistence.

Yet here we are, almost 50 years after the signing of the Helsinki Final Act, with the Russian Federation having brutally invaded another OSCE participating State.

For over 21 months Russia's unprovoked and illegal war of aggression against Ukraine has caused devastating suffering, loss of life, damage, and destruction, and shaken

the European security architecture to its core. Russia's war of aggression is a direct attack on the multilateral system, democratic values, and the rules-based international order.

And let me make this clear: Iceland remains unwavering in its solidarity with Ukraine in the face of Russia's brutal aggression and is united with allies and partners to support Ukraine for as long as it takes.

Mr. Chairperson,

Russia is also directly undermining this very Organization by blocking consensus on decisions of critical importance for its future and functioning.

It is especially disturbing – but also revealing – to see that Russia's attacks are directly targeted at those institutions tasked with protecting and promoting democratic values and human rights.

And that is not all – Russia's withdrawal from the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe and deratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty are yet another example of Russia's aggressive behaviour aimed at undermining European and global security.

Russia's conduct is unacceptable and in stark contradiction to the OSCE commitments that each participating State represented in this room, including Russia, has agreed to respect.

Mr. Chairperson,

In times like these, strengthened multilateral co-operation is of the utmost importance.

We must not shy away from the challenges we face, be it war in Europe, the effects of climate change, or democratic backsliding.

Instead, we must push back against this downward spiral, and be relentless advocates for democracy, freedom and peace that is built on justice.

As an integral part of the multilateral system the effective functioning of this Organization is our joint responsibility – a responsibility we must all take to heart.

Let me assure you that for our part, Iceland remains convinced of the value of the OSCE, its field missions and independent institutions. We are fully committed to continuing to support its work.

I thank you, Mr. Chairperson.



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**Second day of the Thirtieth Meeting**  
MC(30) Journal, Agenda item 8

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

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

Firstly, we reiterate our commitment to the women, peace and security agenda – which celebrated its 23rd anniversary this year – as a cornerstone to achieving comprehensive and sustainable peace and security in the OSCE area. The OSCE, as a regional security organization, has – and will continue to – play a crucial role in implementing the women, peace and security agenda. The continued broad support for the women, peace and security agenda amongst participating States, and our ability to leverage the OSCE as a platform, was well illustrated this year. The Chairmanship of North Macedonia’s Conference on Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment, in Tetovo, served as an important forum to share recommendations and commitments related to enhancing gender mainstreaming in the OSCE and across all dimensions. Our three Forum for Security Co-operation (FSC) Chairmanships, furthermore, undertook tireless efforts to uphold the focus on UN Security Council resolution 1325’s central role in the FSC mandate. These successes demonstrate our ability to place women, peace and security where it belongs: at the top of our, and the OSCE’s, agenda.



As we reflect on this past year, the importance and urgency of implementing the women, peace and security agenda in our region remains clear. The international community has long recognized the significance of incorporating gender perspectives in conflict prevention, conflict resolution and post-conflict rehabilitation. Understanding and integrating these perspectives is essential in addressing the disproportionate impact of conflict on women and girls, in all their diversity. This is happening in a context of a general rollback in women's rights, and concerted efforts by hostile actors to weaponize gender as part of attempts to weaken the international rules-based system and destabilize democracies. By mainstreaming gender in military, political, humanitarian, and diplomatic planning, we can increase the effectiveness of conflict prevention efforts and respond more effectively to these realities, leading to improved outcomes during and following conflict.

Since Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine began, Ukrainian women have been indispensable in courageously defending their country's territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence. They have also played a crucial role in rebuilding their country's future, while facing greater risks of gender-based violence and conflict-related sexual violence. Besides, Ukraine's efforts to revise its National Action Plan during wartime demonstrate not only its commitment to the 1325 agenda, but also the crucial role of the women, peace and security agenda in responding to the gendered dimensions of conflict.

We must address the under-representation of women in the political, public and security sector, particularly in leadership positions. Women's full, equal and meaningful inclusion in security forces ensures a greater diversity of views, which is linked to greater innovation and effectiveness within any organization. It is also well established that women's meaningful participation in peace processes results in more inclusive peace agreements that are effective and last longer. Therefore, it is crucial that structural barriers and underlying causes of under-representation are removed, keeping in mind the intersectional aspects.

Allow me to emphasize that we cannot solve today's global challenges without the full participation of women – not without women soldiers, police officers, human rights defenders, and not without women peacebuilders and their networks. Nor can we attain gender equality without the support, engagement, and accountability of men. Only together can we build a more equal world. We must remember that gender equality is not to the benefit of some, but to the shared benefit of all.

We reaffirm our support for the development of an OSCE-wide Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security for the implementation of UN Security Council resolution 1325 and its follow-up resolutions. In 2020 we made recommendations ranging from the development of national action plans on women, peace and security to encouraging and supporting the sharing of experiences and best practices as regards the full, equal and meaningful participation of women in conflict prevention, conflict resolution and post-conflict rehabilitation. I will attach the 2020 statement to the written version of this statement and I encourage participating States to review these recommendations and where possible implement them.

In conclusion, we underline our commitment to sustained efforts towards our shared goals of ensuring the full, equal, meaningful, and safe participation of women, including in all activities of the OSCE.

Thank you.



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**Second day of the Thirtieth Meeting**  
MC(30) Journal, Agenda item 8

**STATEMENT BY  
THE DELEGATION OF DENMARK  
(ALSO ON BEHALF OF ALBANIA, ANDORRA, AUSTRIA, BELGIUM,  
BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA, BULGARIA, CANADA, CROATIA,  
CYPRUS, CZECHIA, ESTONIA, FINLAND, 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, SERBIA, SLOVAKIA, SLOVENIA, SPAIN, SWEDEN,  
SWITZERLAND, UKRAINE, THE UNITED KINGDOM AND  
THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA)**

I have the honour to make this statement on behalf of the following 45 participating States:

Albania, Andorra, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Estonia, Finland, 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, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain/European Union, Sweden, Switzerland, Ukraine, the United Kingdom, the United States of America and my own country Denmark.

Mr. Chairperson,

The year 2023 marks the 75th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights that recognizes that all humans are born free and equal in dignity and rights, with human rights as the basis for a free, just and peaceful world order. The OSCE principles and commitments and its comprehensive concept of security exemplify this.

Over the past decades, we have made great strides in advancing human rights and fundamental freedoms. Yet, in recent years, it has become more evident than ever that the fight for freedom, gender equality, 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, offline and online. There has been an alarming rise in anti-Semitic and anti-Muslim bigotry and violence in the OSCE area. Discrimination still excludes many from full, equal and meaningful participation in our societies. And peaceful protesters, human rights defenders, journalists and media actors too often face threats and violence.

Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, enabled by the Lukashenka regime in Belarus, serves as the starkest example and reminds us all that human rights and fundamental freedoms are among the primary targets of an aggressor and that ensuring respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms is a prerequisite for lasting security and peace among and within States. We are appalled by the independent 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, forcible transfers and large-scale deportations as well as the use of torture and other ill-treatment, including sexual violence. We strongly condemn these horrific violations and abuses of human rights and violations of international humanitarian law. All alleged violations of international humanitarian and human rights law, war crimes and crimes against humanity must be duly and thoroughly investigated. Those responsible must be held to account.

Mr. Chairperson,

Recognition that respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms is integral to comprehensive security is enshrined in the guiding principles of the Helsinki Final Act. Since this Organization's earliest days, it has been a leading platform for championing the liberty, dignity and equality of all persons who call this region home. 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, including imprisonment, for their brave work, or violent crackdowns on peaceful protesters aspiring for democratic change. We will continue to fight for the rights of women and girls and to promote gender equality. We will press for the release of all those arbitrarily detained or imprisoned for knowing and acting upon their rights. We will keep pressing for the eradication of torture and other ill-treatment. We will continue to support free and fair elections. We will promote tolerance and condemn, investigate, and prosecute hate crimes. We will challenge stereotypes and prejudice, combat myths and disinformation 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 an indispensable part of our countries' conscience and an important partner in advancing the values and work of this Organization. It 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 thank those who joined the Parallel Civil Society Conference on 29 November 2023.

We highly value the Human Dimension Implementation Meeting (HDIM) as an important platform for participating States and civil society to review together the

implementation of the OSCE human dimension commitments. In the regrettable repeated absence of the yearly HDIM, the Warsaw Human Dimension Conference yet again proved a valuable opportunity for an exchange of views with civil society. The continued obstruction of the HDIM is unacceptable. It is important that the HDIM is held next year as mandated, and we will support the efforts of the 2024 Chairmanship to that end. We value and 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 area. As many of the conflicts in our area are linked to failures to observe commitments in the human dimension, these efforts are indispensable.

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.



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**Second day of the Thirtieth Meeting**  
MC(30) Journal, Agenda item 8

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

First of all, Ambassador Djundev, dear Igor, thank you. Thanks to you and Foreign Minister Osmani for your exceptional leadership and, I think it is no exaggeration to say – herculean efforts to keep this Organization focused on its foundational principles and to your insistence on not losing the forest for the trees. You said at the beginning of the year that “It’s about people”. That is absolutely right and – with all due respect to everyone in this Council – it is not just about us diplomats. It is about people like Tatyana and Oleksander. I wish everyone in this Council would have taken the time to listen to them at yesterday’s side event. Oleksander described the inhuman conditions of his detention by Russian authorities – the humiliation, abuse, and violations of his dignity. The irreversible pain that has been permanently seared into his memory and that he will never, ever be able to wipe out of his mind. Or the fact that Tatyana’s son is still languishing somewhere in Russia’s filtration gulag. Disappeared and torn away from his family.

Every minute we spend debating rules of procedure or technicalities of this Organization is a minute less that we devote to talking about the suffering of people like Oleksander and Tatyana. It is not abstract. It is real and it is happening right now as we speak, in Ukraine. Filtration, torture, enforced disappearances. All happening right now. Yes, it is about the Helsinki Final Act and the principles of sovereignty, territorial integrity, and the inviolability of borders. But it is not just about abstract principles of international law. It is about the lives and real-time suffering of children, women, and men who are being targeted simply for being Ukrainian.

Now, I believe the stronger our Organization is, the more we can contribute – in our own way – to supporting Ukraine. We have proven we can make a real difference, by using the Moscow Mechanism to document war crimes in Bucha. By having the victims of filtration camps come and speak at side events. By providing psychological support to children and families, and by telling their stories every week at the Permanent Council. Bilaterally, our countries can support Ukraine militarily; in this Council we can support it morally. In the long run we will also support Russia, because the principles we agreed to in Helsinki and Paris will in fact benefit every citizen of the OSCE area, regardless of their nationality.

To our friends in Malta, we thank you for agreeing to take on the enormous responsibility of defending our values. We have faith in your leadership. We pledge to

support you in every way we can. There is so much work to be done: encouraging peace in the South Caucasus between Armenia and Azerbaijan and the de-occupation of Georgia. Supporting democracy and the rule of law in Moldova and the Western Balkans. Advancing connectivity and trade in Central Asia. Combating anti-Semitism and Islamophobia. We know you will take all of this on and more.

To Secretary General Schmid, dear Helga, we so greatly value your leadership of this Organization and your ability to bring leaders together to advance bold new initiatives, like the high-level event on climate change.

To Director Mecacci, dear Matteo, your Organization is at the heart of our common values – defending human rights and strengthening democratic institutions.

Dear Representative on Freedom of the Media, dear Teresa – your voice on freedom of the media is vital to supporting democracy in our region.

Dear High Commissioner, dear Kairat – you know how essential national minority rights are to peace, stability and democracy and we will continue to support the work of your Organization.

Colleagues, we have a lot of work to do. Count on the United States to work with you to defend our core values. The more united we are, the stronger we are and the more we can do to support the principles that all of us – at one time – pledged to uphold.



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**Second day of the Thirtieth Meeting**  
MC(30) Journal, Agenda item 8

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

I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the following 43 participating States: Albania, Andorra, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Moldova, 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 the European Union delegation.

Mr. Chairperson, recalling the joint statement on the 75th anniversary of the Holodomor of 1932–1933, delivered at the Fifteenth Meeting of the OSCE Ministerial Council, and the resolution of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly of 2008, we commemorate the 90th anniversary of the 1932–1933 Holodomor in Ukraine.

During the Holodomor, the cruel actions and policies of the Stalinist regime caused brutal and prolonged mass starvation, killing millions of innocent people in Ukraine.

We honour the memory of the victims of this tragedy inflicted upon the people of Ukraine. Given the OSCE commitment in the 1990 Copenhagen Document to “clearly and unequivocally condemn totalitarianism,” we once again underline the importance of raising public awareness of the tragic events of our common past, of promoting tolerance and non-discrimination, and of strengthening the rule of law and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms for the prevention of human tragedies in the future.

We acknowledge the efforts undertaken in recent years to educate the public about the Holodomor in the OSCE participating States as well as in the United Nations and its specialized agencies. We recognize the adoption on 1 November 2007 of the relevant UNESCO resolution by 193 Member States. We are determined to take part in relevant events and invite all OSCE participating States to do the same, given the crucial role the OSCE plays in the promotion of respect for human rights and dignity.

We urge participating States to promote the dissemination of information, to educate on the Holodomor in Ukraine and to memorialize it as a dark chapter in world history. Telling the truth about history honours the victims, acknowledges their suffering, and highlights the heroism of those who resisted these totalitarian crimes.

Memorialization also promotes accountability for despots whose policies impose catastrophes, with contempt for the humanity of those affected. Within their national frameworks to promote remembrance and education about the tragedy, certain participating States have recognized the 1932–1933 Holodomor in Ukraine as a State-induced campaign of starvation, while a number of participating States or their legislative branches of government have recognized the Holodomor as a genocide.

For decades the Holodomor – an appalling act of inhumanity – was suppressed and denied by the Soviet Union. Today, there are ongoing attempts by the Russian Federation to glorify Stalinism and deny the Holodomor and other atrocities committed by the communist regime, including through the persecution of all those individuals and organizations who have sought to expose such Soviet era atrocities. We express our grave concern about the repetition of the unconscionable actions of the past.

Today, the Kremlin is again attempting to subjugate the people of Ukraine by force. It is once again using food as a weapon, not just against Ukraine, but also against many countries over the world, by restricting Ukraine’s food exports which are crucial for global food security. Today, Russia’s aggression is accompanied by Stalinist methods of dehumanization campaigns, mass atrocities, cruel filtration procedures, forcible transfers and deportations, including of children, and practices to deny, suppress and punish expressions of Ukrainian identity.

All this is aimed at breaking the will of the Ukrainian people and subjugating the sovereign State of Ukraine. We reiterate our commitment to bring all those responsible to account for the sake of justice and peace, as well as for the prevention of such atrocities and abuses.

We commend Ukraine’s initiatives to ensure global food supplies despite the Russian Federation’s attempts to weaponize food by restricting Ukraine’s food exports, thus undermining global food security, and threatening the supplies people worldwide depend on. We strongly deplore the Russian Federation’s theft and destruction of Ukrainian agricultural products, equipment, and infrastructure as well as the Russian Federation’s efforts to prevent Ukrainian food from reaching the most vulnerable populations around the world.

Mr. Chairperson, the 90th anniversary of the 1932–1933 Holodomor in Ukraine serves as a powerful reminder about the dangers of autocratic regimes. The history of the



Holodomor also reminds us of our common responsibility to defend the cause of humanity and our shared respect for human life.

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



**Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe  
Ministerial Council  
Skopje 2023**

MC(30).JOUR  
30 November–1 December 2023  
Annex 18

Original: ENGLISH

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**Second day of the Thirtieth Meeting**  
MC(30) Journal, Agenda item 8

**STATEMENT BY  
THE DELEGATION OF CANADA**

Mr. Chairperson,

In addition to the statements that Canada has joined, I would like to make a few remarks in my national capacity.

I will begin by thanking the Government of North Macedonia, and particularly the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and North Macedonia's OSCE delegation for their warm hospitality during this year's Ministerial Council meeting and at the various meetings that you have hosted in your beautiful country over the course of this past year.

I would like to reiterate Parliamentary Secretary Oliphant's thanks to the staff of the OSCE for their creativity, determination and resilience in continuing to uphold the mandate of this Organization in the difficult circumstances it is facing. And I would like to extend the same thanks to the team that comprises North Macedonia's delegation in Vienna. We could not have asked for better partners in a challenging year and I underscore this in particular in Canada's role as Chairmanship of the Forum for Security Co-operation.

Mr. Chairperson,

While this Organization has faced many challenges over the last year, the vast majority of participating States have displayed an overwhelming unity on the most important issues: on the need to uphold OSCE commitments; on support for the work of the Secretariat, the autonomous institutions and field missions; on the importance of election monitoring; on the necessity of agreeing on a budget that provides the Organization with the resources it needs to accomplish its mandate; on the holding of the mandated meetings; on the need to address the existential threat posed by climate change; on the importance of strengthening democratic institutions and human rights protections; and, most urgently, on the condemnation of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine.

This overall unity of purpose, and a willingness to engage in good faith where we disagree, is common to almost all participating States. There is, of course, one glaring exception – the Russian Federation.

In its full-scale invasion of Ukraine, Russia has demonstrated its complete rejection of the UN Charter and our shared OSCE commitments. In its incessant targeting of civilians and civilian objects and in the atrocities committed in occupied areas, it has shown its disregard for its human rights and international humanitarian law obligations. And the Russian Federation has sadly pulled Belarus in its wake, making it not only complicit to its act of aggression against Ukraine, but also to its persistent attempts to undermine this Organization from within.

Canada stands with Ukraine as it defends its independence, freedom and democracy.

Canada also stands for effective multilateralism.

The OSCE was created in an era of division, as a platform for finding common ground. While the OSCE is facing challenges, we remain convinced that it can continue to play an important role in providing direct benefits to the people of the region and in restoring the Euro-Atlantic security architecture. As you and your excellent team have demonstrated so clearly, Mr. Chairperson, it is about the people.

In this context, we very much look forward to working with Malta as the Chairmanship in 2024. We have no doubt that Malta will lead the Organization in a principled manner and uphold and defend the OSCE's core principles and commitments. We will stand with them in those efforts.

In closing, Canada would like to sincerely thank you again and the entire Chairmanship team for your extraordinary efforts this year. Canada applauds the firm and principled leadership you have provided as Chairmanship. As Chairmanship of the Forum for Security Co-operation this trimester, we particularly appreciated this close collaboration, and we would like to offer to you, Ambassador Djundev, and to your outstanding team, our most sincere gratitude, respect and admiration.

Thank you.

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



**Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe  
Ministerial Council  
Skopje 2023**

MC(30).JOUR  
30 November–1 December 2023  
Annex 19

ENGLISH  
Original: RUSSIAN

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**Second day of the Thirtieth Meeting**  
MC(30) Journal, Agenda item 8

**STATEMENT BY  
THE DELEGATION OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION  
(ALSO ON BEHALF OF THE REPUBLIC OF BELARUS, THE  
REPUBLIC OF KAZAKHSTAN, THE KYRGYZ REPUBLIC AND  
THE REPUBLIC OF TAJIKISTAN)**

Reaffirming the commitment to the development of friendly, equal and mutually beneficial inter-State relations in the Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian area and to the idea of establishing a free, equitable, 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,

Adhering to the objectives and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, the Helsinki Final Act, the Astana Commemorative Declaration and other consensus documents of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe,

Guided by the common objective of ensuring the harmonious coexistence of different peoples and ethnic, religious and linguistic groups in the Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian area, and recognizing their indisputable right to civilizational, cultural, political, religious and ideological diversity and identity,

In view of the inadmissibility of a policy of exceptionalism, domination, the imposition on peoples of cultural and value paradigms that are alien to them, and given also the inadmissibility of interference in the internal affairs of sovereign States,

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

We affirm the importance of preserving the OSCE as a regional 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, to search for unifying themes and to prevent double standards and geographical and thematic imbalances in its activities.

We believe it is important to observe the Rules of Procedure and other decisions of the OSCE decision-making bodies and to 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 contemporary transnational challenges and threats on an equal basis, primarily international terrorism and extremism, organized crime, illegal migration, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, threats to the security of information and communication technologies, illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons, drug trafficking 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, investment, education, public health, agriculture and tourism, strengthening connectivity, and ensuring the social, economic and cultural rights of citizens;
- Respecting the diverse civilizational, cultural and historical backgrounds of OSCE participating States;
- Protecting the human rights and fundamental freedoms proclaimed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and unconditionally respecting the ethnic, cultural, linguistic and religious identity of national minorities and other ethnic groups;
- Reinvigorating the fight against all forms of discrimination, including discrimination on the basis of race, ethnicity, language, gender and religion, in sports, culture, education and science, and against the ideology of the superiority of one race, religion or nationality over others and manifestations of anti-Semitism, Christianophobia, Islamophobia and xenophobia, aggressive nationalism and neo-Nazism;
- Preserving and promoting freedom of movement of citizens and human contacts, free circulation of goods and capital without ideological and political dividing lines; stimulating the creation of an open, equitable and non-discriminatory environment for development without protectionism, unilateral sanctions and other types of pressure;
- Joining efforts to maintain an open and secure global information space based on the principles of pluralism and freedom of expression, and free from hate speech and the manipulation of public opinion.

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

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



**Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe  
Ministerial Council  
Skopje 2023**

MC(30).JOUR  
30 November–1 December 2023  
Annex 20

ENGLISH  
Original: RUSSIAN

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**Second day of the Thirtieth Meeting**  
MC(30) Journal, Agenda item 8

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

Mr. Chairperson-in-Office,  
Madam Secretary General,  
Colleagues,

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

At the outset, allow me to express my gratitude to the OSCE Chairmanship-in-Office of North Macedonia and to Minister Bujar Osmani personally and his team for the efficient organization of this key annual OSCE event and for the hospitality provided. We consider the exchange of opinions that took place in the current extremely difficult circumstances to have been very useful, despite the directly opposing views and assessments on the part of a number of participating States, which was to be expected. We will not make a tragedy out of it. We have always emphasized that dialogue is useful in any situation – that is what our Organization was created for.

One of the premises on which the Helsinki process was conceived and developed is the shared conviction that the basis for security on the European continent is reciprocal respect for the interests of States, the sovereign equality of States and the collective search for responses to emerging challenges to overall stability. The OSCE has been and remains an integral part of the identity of a greater Europe. This is reflected in the very name of our Organization.

Unfortunately, over the past decades, thanks to the efforts of the Western alliance countries, the OSCE has significantly lost its potential and is going through an acute identity crisis. I am sure that each of the States represented here would like to regard the Organization as a useful tool for the pursuit of its interests. That is only right. But only if the interests of others are taken into account. Such a balance must underpin the OSCE's future action for the benefit of all participating States without exception.

A new, fairer and more democratic world order is being formed before our eyes. New centres of economic, cultural and civilizational influence are rapidly gaining traction. Common tasks in all security dimensions remain before us in the OSCE area. The threats of terrorism, drug trafficking and trafficking in human beings have not disappeared. There is

still work to be done in the economic and environmental dimension. A great many problems remain in the area of linguistic, educational and religious rights and freedoms. We are ready to work together if the OSCE can return to the path of open and honest dialogue, overcome the propensity for confrontation and the pursuit of narrow group interests, and demonstrate its readiness for co-operation on an equal basis with unconditional respect for the fundamental rule of consensus.

We trust that Malta, as the holder of the OSCE Chairmanship-in-Office in 2024, will work in strict compliance with the existing mandate and will be able to restore the culture of diplomatic dialogue and intensive consultations. We are confident that the distinguished Secretary General, Helga Schmid, will provide the Maltese Chairmanship with all the necessary support.

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

Thank you for your attention.





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**Second day of the Thirtieth Meeting**  
MC(30) Journal, Agenda item 9(a)

**STATEMENT BY  
THE CHAIRPERSON (ALSO ON BEHALF OF POLAND,  
MALTA AND FINLAND)**

North Macedonia, Poland, Malta and Finland, representing the previous and current Chairmanships of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), as well as the forthcoming Chairmanships for 2024 and 2025, recognize that the context of the OSCE area has negatively changed since February 2022, and this is directly affecting European security and the OSCE's work. We stand firmly with Ukraine in its right to freely choose its future and once again condemn the use of force by the Russian Federation. Russia bears the full responsibility for its war against Ukraine.

We call on Russia to immediately stop its war against Ukraine, and completely and unconditionally withdraw all its forces and military equipment from the entire territory of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders.

As the OSCE approaches the Helsinki Final Act's 50th anniversary, participating States must reaffirm their commitment to the principles to which all participating States agreed in this historic document, and which they have affirmed many times since. The continuation of Russia's war against Ukraine is a fundamental threat to our Organization and European security. This war has seriously violated the international rules-based order, including the OSCE's founding principles, and undermines the Organization's ability to function effectively. The OSCE exists to deliver results for the people and we must preserve its functionality and efficacy. It is our task to uphold the OSCE's principles and unique role as a regional security organization created to prevent conflicts, implement comprehensive security, and promote human rights and democracy with the rule of law at its core. In times of crisis, the OSCE's leadership will continue to sustain and protect the essential functions of the Organization and guide the process for participating States to resolve ongoing institutional issues and threats to security in the OSCE area. While doing so, the OSCE's values and commitments cannot be compromised.

We mourn the thousands of innocent lives lost in Russia's war against Ukraine. We deplore the widespread suffering that the war has caused for the people of Ukraine and the tensions and instability that it has inflicted on our region and our Organization. We support efforts aimed at ensuring accountability and justice for all crimes committed amidst the Russian war against Ukraine. As we approach the tenth year of the illegal annexation of the Crimean peninsula by Russia, we will not accept the illegal annexation of regions of Ukraine

by the Russian Federation, including the Autonomous Republic of Crimea. Non-use of force, respect for sovereignty, territorial integrity, as well as the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms, are core pillars of the OSCE and must never be undermined.

We call on Belarus to stop enabling Russia's continued war against Ukraine. We remain committed to achieving a comprehensive, just and lasting peace, based on full respect for Ukraine's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders, and reiterate our support for the Peace Formula presented by President Zelensky. In our collective efforts, we must aim for a renewal of trust and co-operation among participating States, which can only be achieved through the restoration of respect for the principles of the Helsinki Final Act and all OSCE commitments.

We recognize that women, children, senior citizens, and people with special needs are most vulnerable in times of conflict and must be afforded special protection. We denounce any attempt to intimidate and terrorize civilians through targeted attacks against civilian infrastructure. We further condemn the abduction and deportation of civilians, including children, as well as arbitrary political imprisonment. We demand from the Russian Federation the immediate release of the three OSCE officials still in detention in Donetsk and Luhansk. We further demand the return of OSCE assets that were illegally seized and taken from their respective storage facilities.

We condemn the destruction of the Kakhovka dam, which led to an ecological catastrophe in southern Ukraine. Such actions are unjustifiable and we call for the perpetrators to be brought to account. Protection of the environment is a key component of the OSCE's comprehensive approach to security and we call on all participating States to comply with the respective commitments. By destroying Ukrainian civil port infrastructure and grain storage facilities, blocking the Black Sea coast of Ukraine, and disrupting lawful transit in and through Ukraine's territorial seas and waterways, Russia exacerbates the global food crisis. We reiterate that challenging global food supplies should not be used by Russia as a weapon of war. We recognize that nuclear safety is a key component of our common security and call on Russia to return control of the nuclear power plant in Zaporizhzhia to Ukraine's civilian authorities.

We commend the resilience of Ukraine's people and society and applaud their commitment to the OSCE principles. The OSCE stands with the Ukrainian people and commends OSCE participating States that have provided shelter for refugees from Ukraine, as well as education for children from Ukraine and access to much needed social services. We applaud the work of the OSCE Support Programme for Ukraine. The OSCE will remain fully engaged in Ukraine, both while the war continues and during post-war recovery. We recognize the need for a multifaceted response to the crisis by the OSCE.

In light of Russia's ongoing war against Ukraine, we reaffirm that the OSCE has the tools to gather evidence to contribute to investigations into alleged breaches of human rights and violations of international humanitarian law, which includes potential war crimes. Various deployments of experts within the framework of the OSCE Moscow Mechanism have provided essential reporting and have served as a platform for accountability.

We recognize that the spillover effects of Russia's war against Ukraine, such as the displacement of civilians, as well as dynamic changes in the security landscape, have affected

the Republic of Moldova and subsequently also the Transnistrian Settlement Process. We applaud the Sides for their commitment to a peaceful resolution of outstanding issues, within the established formats, and recognize the crucial role of the OSCE Mission to Moldova in this process.

We reiterate our strong support to Georgia's sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders.

We note the importance of the Geneva International Discussions, co-chaired by the European Union, the OSCE, and the United Nations, to address the consequences of the 2008 conflict in Georgia and welcome the implementation of three rounds of this negotiation format in 2023. We note the 5 and 6 December meeting of the 59th round of the Geneva International Discussions to address key strategic and humanitarian matters as enshrined in the six-point ceasefire agreement and to deliver results to the conflict-affected populations. We also commend the work of the related Incident Prevention and Response Mechanism in Ergneti, co-facilitated by the OSCE and the European Union Monitoring Mission in Georgia, and call for the restart of the Gali Incident Prevention and Response Mechanism without delay.

We encourage the continued dialogue between Armenia and Azerbaijan and emphasize that dialogue and diplomacy should be the only means to settle disagreements and disputes. The use of force is unacceptable in overcoming differences, and we call on the parties to engage in good-faith negotiations to forge the necessary agreements to achieve sustainable peace and stability in the region. We underscore that the OSCE possesses the experience, expertise, and tools to serve as a platform for further dialogue and implementation of confidence-building measures.

We understand that long-term conflict settlement and long-lasting peace will only be achieved through co-operation across the OSCE area and beyond. We appreciate and remain convinced of the value of effective co-operation with our Mediterranean and Asian Partners for Co-operation, supporting our work to address global challenges. Close collaboration as well as honest and ongoing dialogue is indispensable for creating mutual trust and stability for the OSCE area. We look forward to continuing and deepening our good co-operation.

We welcome the decisions made throughout the Ministerial Council with regard to the Chairmanship for 2024 as well as the top four leadership positions in the Organization. We recognize that a clear mandate for the upcoming Chairmanship is indispensable for the future of our Organization and for enhancing the OSCE's stability. We commend efforts made to find an agreeable solution. We regret the obstruction to this process by Russia and Belarus and call on them in future to act responsibly and in the best interests of our Organization.

We recall that all OSCE participating States joined the OSCE as a platform for pan-European dialogue based on shared values and principles to which all agreed. 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, and the Charter of Paris for a New Europe. The OSCE is unique in its geographical scope and as an essential tool for a dialogue of equals on European security issues. We strongly commend the use of this forum to settle disputes and conflicts.

Finally, we commend the Organization for continuing to fulfil its core functions, providing a platform for dialogue and delivering essential work in the field. We recognize that we stand at a crossroads of history, not only for our Organization but also for security and stability in Europe. We owe future generations the opportunity to grow up in a free, democratic and peaceful world. Only through the restoration of peace and security in our region can we truly comply with the principles set out in the founding documents and return to a constructive dialogue.



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**Second day of the Thirtieth Meeting**  
MC(30) Journal, Agenda item 9(b)

**LETTER FROM THE CHAIRPERSON  
OF THE FORUM FOR SECURITY CO-OPERATION TO THE  
MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF NORTH MACEDONIA,  
CHAIRPERSON OF THE THIRTIETH MEETING OF THE  
MINISTERIAL COUNCIL OF THE OSCE**

As Chairperson of the Forum for Security Co-operation (FSC), it is my honour to inform you about the Forum's work in 2023.

In preparing this letter, I have consulted with the 2023 FSC Chairmanships, namely, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Bulgaria. During 2023, we worked in close co-operation to ensure continuity and efficiency in the implementation of the Forum's annual work programme.

This year marked the second year of FSC operations under the unprecedented security situation and geopolitical tensions arising from Russia's unjustified and unprovoked war against Ukraine, launched on 24 February 2022. The war against Ukraine continues to negatively impact the whole security architecture in Europe and beyond, jeopardizing the Organization's underlying concept of co-operative security. In its response to the unprecedented security situation, the FSC, in close co-ordination with the Chairperson of the Permanent Council and the OSCE Secretariat, have led the FSC's work in the spirit of preserving its mandate against the current security challenges. All three FSC Chairmanships continuously highlighted the role of the FSC in upholding peace, security, and democracy and promoted its dialogue on security across the OSCE area.

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 exchanges on the war against Ukraine under the FSC's agenda item "General statements", in total, 12 Security Dialogues were held<sup>1</sup>.

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1 Topics of the Security Dialogues that took place in 2023: Small arms and light weapons and stockpiles of conventional ammunition in south-east Europe; the OSCE Code of Conduct and the security sector; mine action; \*Joint meeting of the FSC and the Permanent Council on UNSCR 1325/women, peace and security; Black Sea region – security horizons; Capacity development in humanitarian mine action; OSCE Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security (international humanitarian law, private military and security companies); UNSCR 1325/women, peace and security; \*Joint meeting of the FSC

All three FSC Chairmanships emphasized the importance of mine action and combating illicit trafficking of small arms and light weapons (SALW) and stockpiles of conventional ammunition (SCA), each holding a Security Dialogue on those topics, in the context of south-east Europe (FSC Chairmanship of Bosnia and Herzegovina), capacity development (FSC Chairmanship of Bulgaria) and the impact on children (FSC Chairmanship of Canada).

All three FSC Chairmanships prioritized the importance of international humanitarian law in the light of ongoing conflicts in the region, guided by the norms and principles set by the OSCE Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security.

Since the last Ministerial Council meeting of the OSCE, several initiatives undertaken by some participating States were designed to support the implementation of existing politico-military commitments in the field of the information exchange on the Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security by updating the voluntary questionnaire on the implementation of UN Security Council resolution 1325. To raise awareness on the topic of children and armed conflict, the Group of Friends developed a new voluntary questionnaire on children and armed conflict.

In order to increase awareness and widen the understanding of the destructive impacts of war and its consequences, two joint meetings of the FSC and the Permanent Council explored the important topics of the security and environment nexus (under the FSC Chairmanship of Bulgaria) and the mental health impacts of war (under the FSC Chairmanship of Canada).

All three FSC Chairmanships held Security Dialogues – one of them in a joint meeting of the FSC and the Permanent Council (under the Chairmanship of Bosnia and Herzegovina) – on the topic related to the implementation of UN Security Council resolution 1325 and advancing the women, peace and security agenda towards the full, equal and meaningful participation of women in decision-making processes at all levels pertaining to security issues in the OSCE area. Throughout the year, the FSC Chairmanships supported the 2023 OSCE Scholarship for Peace and Security training programme empowering youth, especially women, to engage meaningfully in policy-making, planning and implementation processes in conflict prevention and resolution through arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation in the OSCE area.

Under the Chairmanship of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Chairmanship of Bulgaria, the focus of the FSC's work included a focus on regional security in south-east Europe and the Black Sea region respectively.

The work of the Forum for Security Co-operation has been affected by the deterioration of trust amongst the participating States. Despite the efforts of the FSC Chairmanships 2023, 3 out of 15 proposed Security Dialogues did not take place due to one participating State not agreeing upon those meetings' agendas. Respective FSC

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and the Permanent Council on security and environment; mine action (focus on the effect on children); Women, peace and security; \*Joint meeting of the FSC and the Permanent Council on the mental health impacts of war.

Chairmanships, with the support of the FSC Troika, chose to organize side events on the value of subregional initiatives for arms control, international humanitarian law with a focus on military command responsibility and information integrity in the military space.

The military information exchange remained at a high rate, although some participating States decided not to exchange the information at all or not to provide it to all participating States in light of the current security situation. The development of the OSCE Information Management and Reporting System (iMARS) progressed with efforts to expand States' access over the OSCE Communications Network and build data loaders to keep iMARS daily updated with incoming information.

The FSC continued to support the OSCE's work in the politico-military dimension of security on practical assistance in the area of the SALW and stockpiles of conventional ammunition (SCA) controls. The OSCE's assistance projects on SALW and SCA continued to provide steady support in 2023. In 2023, the OSCE managed a portfolio of 19 assistance projects, worth 52 million euros, delivering a wide range of tailored technical assistance throughout the OSCE area. Several projects are aimed at ensuring the secure and safe management of stockpiles of SALW and SCA through infrastructure, material and equipment upgrades at storage sites, as well as establishment of laboratories for chemical analysis of SCA stability and its surveillance. A significant element of the projects was providing support to the efforts of combating illicit trafficking in SALW across the OSCE area. Considerable support was provided to Central Asia in support of countering the threat and risk of potential SALW and SCA trafficking from Afghanistan, as well as strengthening physical security of SCA. Consistent progress was also made throughout south-eastern Europe. Further information and details on the individual SALW and SCA assistance projects is always available through the SALW portal (<https://salw.osce.org/>).

In 2023, on average 30 per cent women and 70 per cent men participated in the FSC plenaries and the co-ordination meetings of the politico-military focal points. The panellists providing expert views in Security Dialogues and/or side events in 2023 were comprised of 38 per cent women and 62 per cent men.

In 2023, the security situation precluded the conduct of the FSC-related annual meetings. Despite best efforts, each Chairmanship concluded that there was no agreement on the conduct of these meetings in light of the current security situation. An informal briefing on SALW and SCA projects in the OSCE was held for participating States, Partners for Co-operation, OSCE Secretariat and field operations in the absence of an annual meeting. In the absence of consensus on the Annual Discussion on the Implementation of the Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security, a dedicated thematic FSC Security Dialogue was held in the second session.

The FSC Chairmanships commend the work of the Conflict Prevention Centre in developing both introductory and in-depth e-learning modules covering FSC-related topics, which are aimed at systematizing the transfer of knowledge on, *inter alia*, military information exchanges, the Vienna Document and confidence- and security-building measures, SALW and SCA, conventional arms control, and the Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security. Thus far, over 1,000 participants, including over 350 women from 48 participating States, have taken part in the programme. This excellent resource is available, in English and Russian, for delegates of participating States and

Partners for Co-operation in Vienna, national focal points in their capitals, and staff of Verification Centres.

In 2023, the Forum unfortunately witnessed the withdrawal from the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe by one State Party, followed by the suspension of the Treaty by a large majority of States Parties. The Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe is one of the pillars of the OSCE Framework for Arms Control.

In conclusion, the Forum for Security Co-operation remains committed to serving as an important platform for dialogue and decision-making in the first dimension, providing participating States with a platform to discuss politico-military security issues, raise security concerns, and keep each other accountable for adherence to the OSCE principles and implementation of their commitments.





**Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe  
Ministerial Council**

MC.DEC/1/23  
25 January 2023

Original: ENGLISH

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**DECISION No. 1/23  
TIME AND PLACE OF THE NEXT MEETING OF THE OSCE  
MINISTERIAL COUNCIL**

The Ministerial Council,

Decides that the Thirtieth Meeting of the OSCE Ministerial Council will be held in Skopje on 30 November and 1 December 2023.

MC.DEC/1/23  
25 January 2023  
Attachment

ENGLISH  
Original: RUSSIAN

**INTERPRETATIVE STATEMENT UNDER  
PARAGRAPH IV.1(A)6 OF THE RULES OF PROCEDURE  
OF THE ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY AND  
CO-OPERATION IN EUROPE**

By the delegation of the Russian Federation:

“While joining the consensus regarding the decision on the time and place of the next meeting of the OSCE Ministerial Council, the Russian Federation assumes that North Macedonia, as the host country of that event, as well as all transit countries, will take exhaustive measures to ensure that the representatives of all the OSCE participating States without exception, at whatever political level they themselves choose, can come to Skopje. This means that there will be no discrimination with regard to the composition of national delegations, nor any impediment to the flight or travel of members of delegations to the Ministerial Council venue by the means of their choice, including special flights. In this regard, we take note of the statements by the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office that North Macedonia will make all the necessary efforts to that end.

We emphasize that improper implementation of the OSCE documents governing the convening of the Ministerial Council will make it impossible for any decisions and documents to be adopted at the meeting.

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



**Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe  
Ministerial Council  
Skopje 2023**

MC.DEC/2/23  
1 December 2023

Original: ENGLISH

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**Second day of the Thirtieth Meeting**  
MC(30) Journal, Agenda item 7

**DECISION No. 2/23  
OSCE CHAIRMANSHIP IN THE YEAR 2024**

The Ministerial Council,

Welcoming the readiness by Malta to assume the function of the OSCE Chairmanship in 2024,

Decides that Malta will exercise the function of the OSCE Chairmanship in the year 2024.

MC.DEC/2/23  
1 December 2023  
Attachment 1

Original: ENGLISH

**INTERPRETATIVE STATEMENT UNDER  
PARAGRAPH IV.1(A)6 OF THE RULES OF PROCEDURE  
OF THE ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY AND  
CO-OPERATION IN EUROPE**

By the delegation of Malta:

“Mr. Chairperson,  
Distinguished colleagues,

I wish to start by expressing my gratitude to you, Bujar, and the distinguished representatives of the participating States, for placing your trust in Malta to assume the Chairmanship in 2024.

In the most unprecedented circumstances, Malta heeded your request. We accepted to take up this vital role, as we remain strong believers in this OSCE, its relevance and the principle of consensus which has underpinned the *raison d'être* of this Organization since its inception in 1975. And this principle remains the bedrock of our joint endeavours and our shared responsibility.

Although quite late in the day, we are pleased that as an OSCE community we could reach consensus. This demonstrates our collective ambition to save our Organization and to put it on the path to make it thrive again for the well-being of all.

Mr. Chairperson,

We are most grateful to Estonia for their candidature. Like the European Union, Malta stood firmly and strongly behind Estonia's candidacy. Estonia respects OSCE commitments and fulfils all the necessary criteria to steer the OSCE as the Chairmanship. We regret that Estonia's candidature could not garner the necessary consensus. For us, Estonia remains a solid, relevant, and dependable partner.

Mr. Chairperson,

Malta takes up its role as Chairmanship in 2024 with absolute commitment.

Sixty years into our independence in 1964, Malta's foreign policy has consistently been rooted in a steadfast belief system, committed to upholding international principles and obligations. Geographically positioned at the crossroads of the Mediterranean, Malta has perpetually embraced a mission to act as a bridge builder, facilitating connections and fostering co-operation.

This is a historic moment for my country as we embark on chairing this august body for the very first time. We feel honoured but also humbled ahead of the great responsibility and duty that lies ahead of us.

To fulfil our role, we depend on the close co-operation and support of all participating States to fulfil the OSCE's mandate, and to return to our shared values in full respect of our agreed principles and commitments.

As so very well expressed in your Chairmanship's motto – 'It's all about people' – it is paramount to work on improving, intensifying, and bridging our relations to overcome distrust for the good of all, and to build back confidence.

Thank you."

MC.DEC/2/23  
1 December 2023  
Attachment 2

Original: ENGLISH

**INTERPRETATIVE STATEMENT UNDER  
PARAGRAPH IV.1(A)6 OF THE RULES OF PROCEDURE  
OF THE ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY AND  
CO-OPERATION IN EUROPE**

By the delegation of the United States of America:

“In connection with the adoption of the decision on the OSCE Chairmanship in the year 2024, the United States would like to make the following interpretative statement under paragraph IV.1(A)6 of the OSCE Rules of Procedure.

The United States welcomes the appointment of Malta as Chairmanship for 2024. We thank Malta for answering the call to lead the OSCE at this critical time. We have every confidence that Malta will be a principled and capable Chairmanship that will ensure the OSCE’s continued effectiveness in the next year.

We appreciate also Estonia’s willingness to lead the Organization and look forward to a future Chairmanship.

This decision was taken at the very last minute, which should not be the case. We would like to remind one delegation of its commitment to appoint a Chairmanship ‘as a rule two years before the Chairmanship’s term of office starts.’

We look forward to supporting Malta in every way we can as it takes up the Chairmanship.

I request that this statement be attached to the decision and to the journal of the day.”

MC.DEC/2/23  
1 December 2023  
Attachment 3

Original: ENGLISH

**INTERPRETATIVE STATEMENT UNDER  
PARAGRAPH IV.1(A)6 OF THE RULES OF PROCEDURE  
OF THE ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY AND  
CO-OPERATION IN EUROPE**

By the delegation of the United Kingdom:

“Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

In connection with the approval of the Ministerial Council decision on the OSCE Chairmanship in the year 2024, the United Kingdom would like to make the following interpretative statement under Paragraph IV.1(A)6 of the OSCE Rules of Procedure.

The United Kingdom welcomes the appointment of Malta and wishes them every success in carrying out their duties as Chairmanship for 2024. We particularly appreciate Malta’s willingness to answer the call of its participating State partners to take up this important undertaking at such a late stage. We offer the United Kingdom’s full support to Malta as it prepares, and holds, the Chairmanship. We encourage others to do the same.

The United Kingdom thanks the current Chairmanship, North Macedonia, for their good faith efforts over the last year to try to bring a resolution to this issue.

We strongly endorsed Estonia’s candidacy. The United Kingdom notes with regret that two participating States could not join consensus on that candidacy. Estonia would have been a principled and competent Chairmanship – and still could be in future.

Mr. Chairperson, I request that this interpretative statement be attached to this decision and included in the journal of the day.”

MC.DEC/2/23  
1 December 2023  
Attachment 4

Original: ENGLISH

**INTERPRETATIVE STATEMENT UNDER  
PARAGRAPH IV.1(A)6 OF THE RULES OF PROCEDURE  
OF THE ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY AND  
CO-OPERATION IN EUROPE**

By the delegation of Norway (also on behalf of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Canada, Georgia, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Moldova, Monaco, Switzerland, Ukraine and the United Kingdom):

“I am speaking on behalf of the following countries Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Canada, Georgia, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Moldova, Monaco, the United Kingdom, Switzerland, Ukraine, and of my own country Norway in relation to the decision on the OSCE Chairmanship for 2024. In this context, we wish to make the following statement under paragraph IV.1(A)6 of the OSCE Rules of Procedure:

Our delegations endorse this decision and extend our gratitude to North Macedonia’s Chairmanship for their exceptional leadership in forging consensus on critical issues, thereby enhancing the OSCE’s effectiveness.

We express our deep appreciation to Malta for agreeing to uphold the operational integrity of the OSCE by accepting the Chairmanship for 2024. This gesture demonstrates Malta’s commitment and capability, and we pledge our full support to assist in their endeavours. We fully endorse Malta’s nomination for the 2024 OSCE Chairmanship and look forward to a productive and co-operative relationship during their term.

We deeply regret that Russia and Belarus have impeded Estonia’s candidacy for the 2024 OSCE Chairmanship. We believe that Estonia would have been a principled and reliable Chairmanship for the OSCE. We thank Estonia for its willingness to lead the Organization.

The consensus principle is in the DNA of the OSCE, serving as the bedrock upon which collaborative decisions are made. In our pursuit of collaborative decision-making, we must remain vigilant against the misuse of the consensus principle for unilateral purposes, which erodes the very foundation of our collective trust and co-operation.”



**INTERPRETATIVE STATEMENT UNDER  
PARAGRAPH IV.1(A)6 OF THE RULES OF PROCEDURE  
OF THE ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY AND  
CO-OPERATION IN EUROPE**

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

“In connection with the adoption of the decision on the OSCE Chairmanship in the year 2024, the European Union would like to make the following interpretative statement under paragraph IV.1(A)6 of the OSCE Rules of Procedure:

The European Union has joined the consensus on adopting this decision and expresses its appreciation to the Chairmanship of North Macedonia for the dedicated efforts in fostering consensus on pressing matters for the effectiveness of the OSCE.

We express our gratitude to Malta for agreeing to step in at the eleventh hour to preserve the functionality of the Organization and assume responsibilities as the Chairmanship of the OSCE in 2024. We commend Malta’s commitment to upholding the values and principles of the Organization. In this regard, the European Union expresses its full support for Malta’s 2024 OSCE Chairmanship nomination and looks forward to co-operating closely and constructively during its tenure.

We reiterate our deep regret that the same two participating States, Russia and its accomplice in its ongoing war of aggression against Ukraine, Belarus, have blocked the candidature of Estonia for the 2024 OSCE Chairmanship. The European Union has remained steadfast in its support of Estonia’s candidacy and is confident that Estonia would serve as a principled and reliable Chairmanship.

We reiterate that all participating States have the responsibility to facilitate and not obstruct the necessary decisions for the effectiveness of the OSCE by using the consensus rule as a weapon.

The candidate countries North Macedonia<sup>1</sup>, Montenegro<sup>1</sup>, Albania<sup>1</sup>, Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, and Bosnia and Herzegovina<sup>1</sup>, the potential candidate country Georgia, as well as Andorra align themselves with this statement.”

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

MC.DEC/2/23  
1 December 2023  
Attachment 6

Original: ENGLISH

**INTERPRETATIVE STATEMENT UNDER  
PARAGRAPH IV.1(A)6 OF THE RULES OF PROCEDURE  
OF THE ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY AND  
CO-OPERATION IN EUROPE**

By the delegation of Armenia:

“Mr. Chairperson,

The delegation of the Republic of Armenia would like to make the following interpretative statement under paragraph IV.1(A)6 of the Rules of Procedure of the OSCE in connection with the adoption of the Ministerial Council decision on the OSCE Chairmanship in the year 2024.

We would like to thank Malta for expressing its readiness to assume the leadership of this Organization in this challenging time. We acknowledge that it was not easy to make that decision under the current circumstances. The readiness of Malta to provide its valuable leadership and assistance in resolving the stalemate within the OSCE is greatly appreciated and fully endorsed by Armenia.

We stand ready to constructively engage and support Malta in fulfilling its mandate work in 2024.

I kindly ask this interpretative statement to be attached to the decision adopted and reflected in the journal of the day.

Thank you.”



**Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe  
Ministerial Council  
Skopje 2023**

MC.DEC/3/23  
1 December 2023

Original: ENGLISH

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**Second day of the Thirtieth Meeting**  
MC(30) Journal, Agenda item 7

**DECISION No. 3/23  
EXTENSION OF THE APPOINTMENT OF THE  
OSCE SECRETARY GENERAL**

The Ministerial Council,

Recalling the decision of the Ministerial Council taken at its third meeting in Stockholm in 1992 to establish the post of Secretary General, Ministerial Council Decision No. 15/04 of 7 December 2004 on the role of the OSCE Secretary General, Ministerial Council Decision No. 18/06 of 5 December 2006 on further strengthening the effectiveness of OSCE executive structures and Ministerial Council Decision No. 3/08 of 22 October 2008 on the periods of service of the OSCE Secretary General,

Reaffirming the necessity that the OSCE Secretary General carries out her functions in full compliance with the OSCE principles, commitments and decisions as well as with the mandate of the OSCE Secretary General,

Considering that the term of office of the current Secretary General of the OSCE, Ms. Helga Maria Schmid, comes to an end on 3 December 2023,

Decides that, as an exceptional temporary measure aimed at ensuring an essential level of leadership for the OSCE when appointment for the regular period is not feasible, Ms. Helga Maria Schmid shall remain in office as the Secretary General of the OSCE until 3 September 2024.

MC.DEC/3/23  
1 December 2023  
Attachment 1

Original: ENGLISH

**INTERPRETATIVE STATEMENT UNDER  
PARAGRAPH IV.1(A)6 OF THE RULES OF PROCEDURE  
OF THE ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY AND  
CO-OPERATION IN EUROPE**

By the delegation of the United States of America:

“In connection with the adoption of the decision on the extension of the mandate of the OSCE Secretary General, the United States would like to make the following interpretative statement under paragraph IV.1(A)6 of the OSCE Rules of Procedure.

The United States welcomes the extension of the term of Secretary General Helga Schmid. While we joined consensus on this decision as an exceptional temporary measure in the interest of ensuring the continued leadership of the OSCE, this should have been a regular three-year extension. This decision does not set a precedent for future appointments or extensions of the term of the Secretary General.

We support the work of the Secretary General and the OSCE Secretariat. We recall that the Secretary General derives his/her authority from the collective decisions of the participating States and acts under the guidance of the Chairperson-in-Office. He or she is the chief administrative officer of the OSCE, and is tasked, among other things, to act as the representative of the Chairperson-in-Office and support him or her in all activities aimed at fulfilling the goals of the OSCE.

Nothing in this decision should be interpreted to alter the mandate of the Secretary General or restrict the work of the Secretary General in the full exercise of his or her mandate.

Finally, the United States underscores that it is the OSCE participating States which have adopted the OSCE’s principles, commitments, and decisions, and it is first and foremost the responsibility of the participating States to implement them.

I request that this interpretative statement be attached to the decision and that it be included in the journal of the day.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.”

MC.DEC/3/23  
1 December 2023  
Attachment 2

ENGLISH  
Original: RUSSIAN

**INTERPRETATIVE STATEMENT UNDER  
PARAGRAPH IV.1(A)6 OF THE RULES OF PROCEDURE  
OF THE ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY AND  
CO-OPERATION IN EUROPE**

By the delegation of the Russian Federation:

“Having joined the consensus regarding the extension of the Secretary General’s term of office, the Russian Federation emphasizes the exceptional nature of this decision, which does not relieve the head of this OSCE executive structure of the responsibility for strict compliance with its mandate as approved by the participating States of the Organization.

It is our understanding that the incoming Maltese Chairmanship will launch without delay in early 2024 a competition procedure to fill the position in question.

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

MC.DEC/3/23  
1 December 2023  
Attachment 3

Original: ENGLISH

**INTERPRETATIVE STATEMENT UNDER  
PARAGRAPH IV.1(A)6 OF THE RULES OF PROCEDURE  
OF THE ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY AND  
CO-OPERATION IN EUROPE**

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

“In connection with the adoption of the decision on the extension of the mandate of the OSCE Secretary General, Ms. Helga Maria Schmid, the European Union would like to make the following interpretative statement under paragraph IV.1(A)6 of the OSCE Rules of Procedure:

The European Union fully supports the extension of the mandates for all four top leadership positions. This approach ensures the proper functioning of the Organization and its comprehensive approach to security, especially in these challenging times, marked by Russia’s ongoing war of aggression against Ukraine.

The European Union welcomes the extension of the mandate for Ms. Helga Maria Schmid. We fully support the work of the Secretary General and the OSCE Secretariat.

However, we express deep regret that, due to the position of one participating State, consensus was blocked for both a three-year renewal as provided by the Rules of Procedure and a one-year extension proposed by the Chairmanship as a compromise solution.

We consider that a nine-month extension is an exceptional measure that falls short of ensuring the necessary continuity and an essential level of sound administration. We emphasize that this, in no way, sets a precedent for the future.

We call upon all participating States to recognize the importance of providing the OSCE with continuity under strong leadership, particularly when its principles, commitments and values are more crucial than ever for our common security.

We request that this interpretative statement be attached to the decision and included in the journal of the day.

The candidate countries North Macedonia<sup>1</sup>, Montenegro<sup>1</sup>, Albania<sup>1</sup>, Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, and Bosnia and Herzegovina<sup>1</sup>, the potential candidate country Georgia, as well as Andorra align themselves with this statement.”

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

MC.DEC/3/23  
1 December 2023  
Attachment 4

Original: ENGLISH

**INTERPRETATIVE STATEMENT UNDER  
PARAGRAPH IV.1(A)6 OF THE RULES OF PROCEDURE  
OF THE ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY AND  
CO-OPERATION IN EUROPE**

By the delegation of Canada (also on behalf of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Monaco, Montenegro, Norway, Switzerland and Ukraine):

“I am speaking on behalf of the following countries – Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Monaco, Montenegro, Norway, Switzerland, Ukraine, and my own country Canada – in relation to the decision on the extension of the appointment of the OSCE Secretary General, Ms. Helga Schmid. In this context, we wish to make the following interpretative statement under paragraph IV.1(A)6 of the OSCE Rules of Procedure:

Our delegations endorse these decisions and reiterate our gratitude to North Macedonia’s Chairmanship for their exceptional leadership in forging consensus on critical issues, thereby enhancing the OSCE’s effectiveness.

We would like to express our appreciation for and trust in the current leadership of the executive structures. Our position has long been that we would support a full renewal of all four mandates for three years.

We deeply regret that consensus for a three-year renewal could not be reached. In the spirit of co-operation, we support the current shorter extension as a temporary and exceptional measure, but this should in no way be seen as setting a precedent for future decisions in relation to the leadership of the Organization.

The consensus principle, fundamental to the OSCE, forms the foundation of our collaborative decisions. We must guard against its misuse for individual agendas, as this undermines our shared trust and co-operation.

We would like to request that this statement be attached to the decision and reflected in the journal of the day.”



MC.DEC/3/23  
1 December 2023  
Attachment 5

Original: ENGLISH

**INTERPRETATIVE STATEMENT UNDER  
PARAGRAPH IV.1(A)6 OF THE RULES OF PROCEDURE  
OF THE ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY AND  
CO-OPERATION IN EUROPE**

By the delegation of the United Kingdom:

“Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

In connection with the approval of the Ministerial Council decision on the extension of the appointment of the OSCE Secretary General, the United Kingdom would like to make the following interpretative statement under paragraph IV.1(A)6 of the OSCE Rules of Procedure.

The United Kingdom joins the consensus on the extension of the appointment of the OSCE Secretary General and wishes her every success. We particularly appreciate her willingness to continue in this important role – at such a late stage. We offer the United Kingdom’s full support and encourage others to do the same.

The United Kingdom regrets that we have had to adopt these decisions as exceptional temporary measures.

However, we note that, along with the new Chairmanship and other leadership positions, this decision supports the predictability and stability of the OSCE, at a particularly difficult time.

Mr. Chairperson, I request that this interpretative statement be attached to this decision and included in the journal of the day.”



**Second day of the Thirtieth Meeting**  
MC(30) Journal, Agenda item 7

**DECISION No. 4/23**  
**APPOINTMENT OF THE DIRECTOR OF THE OFFICE FOR**  
**DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS AND HUMAN RIGHTS**

The Ministerial Council,

Recalling the 1990 Charter of Paris and the decision of the Ministerial Council taken at its second meeting in Prague in 1992 concerning the development of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR),

Reaffirming the necessity that the Director of the ODIHR carries out his functions in full compliance with the OSCE principles, commitments and decisions as well as with the mandate of ODIHR,

Considering that the term of office of the current Director of the ODIHR, Mr. Matteo Mecacci, comes to an end on 3 December 2023,

Decides that, as an exceptional temporary measure aimed at ensuring an essential level of leadership for the ODIHR when appointment for the regular period is not feasible, Mr. Matteo Mecacci shall remain in office as the Director of the ODIHR until 3 September 2024.

MC.DEC/4/23  
1 December 2023  
Attachment 1

Original: ENGLISH

**INTERPRETATIVE STATEMENT UNDER  
PARAGRAPH IV.1(A)6 OF THE RULES OF PROCEDURE  
OF THE ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY AND  
CO-OPERATION IN EUROPE**

By the delegation of the United States of America:

“In connection with the adoption of the decision on the appointment of the Director of the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), the United States would like to make the following interpretative statement under paragraph IV.1(A)6 of the OSCE Rules of Procedure.

The United States welcomes the extension of the term of ODIHR Director Matteo Mecacci. While we joined consensus on this decision as an exceptional temporary measure in the interest of ensuring continued leadership of the OSCE, this should have been a regular three-year extension. This decision does not set a precedent for future appointments or extensions of the term of the Director of the ODIHR.

We fully respect the autonomy and support the work of the ODIHR. Unfortunately, in recent years, there has been pressure from some participating States to weaken the OSCE’s autonomous institutions and cut resources for them. Nothing in this decision should be interpreted to diminish the autonomy of or restrict the work of the Director of the ODIHR in the full exercise of his or her mandate.

Finally, the United States underscores that it is the OSCE participating States which have adopted the OSCE’s principles, commitments and decisions and it is first and foremost the responsibility of the participating States to implement them.

I request that this interpretative statement be attached to the decision and that it be included in the journal of the day.”

MC.DEC/4/23  
1 December 2023  
Attachment 2

ENGLISH  
Original: RUSSIAN

**INTERPRETATIVE STATEMENT UNDER  
PARAGRAPH IV.1(A)6 OF THE RULES OF PROCEDURE  
OF THE ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY AND  
CO-OPERATION IN EUROPE**

By the delegation of the Russian Federation:

“Having joined the consensus regarding the extension of the term of office of the Director of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, the Russian Federation emphasizes the exceptional nature of this decision, which does not relieve the head of this OSCE executive structure of the responsibility for strict compliance with its mandate as approved by the participating States of the Organization.

It is our understanding that the incoming Maltese Chairmanship will launch without delay in early 2024 a competition procedure to fill the position in question.

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

**INTERPRETATIVE STATEMENT UNDER  
PARAGRAPH IV.1(A)6 OF THE RULES OF PROCEDURE  
OF THE ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY AND  
CO-OPERATION IN EUROPE**

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

“In connection with the adoption of the decision on the appointment of the Director of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), Mr. Matteo Mecacci, the European Union would like to make the following interpretative statement under paragraph IV.1(A)6 of the OSCE Rules of Procedure:

The European Union fully supports the extension of the mandates for all four top leadership positions. This approach ensures the proper functioning of the Organization and its comprehensive approach to security, especially in these challenging times, marked by Russia’s ongoing war of aggression against Ukraine.

The European Union welcomes the extension of the mandate for Mr. Matteo Mecacci. We fully support the work of the ODIHR Director and the Office.

However, we express deep regret that, due to the position of one participating State, consensus was blocked for both a three-year renewal as provided by the Rules of Procedure and a one-year extension proposed by the Chairmanship as a compromise solution.

We consider that a nine-month extension is an exceptional measure that falls short of ensuring the necessary continuity and an essential level of sound administration. We emphasize that this, in no way, sets a precedent for the future.

We call upon all participating States to recognize the importance of providing the OSCE with continuity under strong leadership, particularly when its principles, commitments and values are more crucial than ever for our common security.

We request that this interpretative statement be attached to the decision and included in the journal of the day.

The candidate countries North Macedonia<sup>1</sup>, Montenegro<sup>1</sup>, Albania<sup>1</sup>, Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, and Bosnia and Herzegovina<sup>1</sup>, the potential candidate country Georgia, as well as Andorra align themselves with this statement.”

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

MC.DEC/4/23  
1 December 2023  
Attachment 4

Original: ENGLISH

**INTERPRETATIVE STATEMENT UNDER  
PARAGRAPH IV.1(A)6 OF THE RULES OF PROCEDURE  
OF THE ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY AND  
CO-OPERATION IN EUROPE**

By the delegation of Canada (also on behalf of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Monaco, Montenegro, Norway, Switzerland and Ukraine):

“I am speaking on behalf of the following countries – Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Monaco, Montenegro, Norway, Switzerland, Ukraine, and my own country Canada – in relation to the decision on the appointment of the Director of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, Mr. Matteo Mecacci. In this context, we wish to make the following interpretive statement under paragraph IV.1(A)6 of the OSCE Rules of Procedure:

Our delegations endorse these decisions and reiterate our gratitude to North Macedonia’s Chairmanship for their exceptional leadership in forging consensus on critical issues, thereby enhancing the OSCE’s effectiveness.

We would like to express our appreciation for and trust in the current leadership of the executive structures. Our position has long been that we would support a full renewal of all four mandates for three years.

We deeply regret that consensus for a three-year renewal could not be reached. In the spirit of co-operation, we support the current shorter extension as a temporary and exceptional measure but this should in no way be seen as setting a precedent for future decisions in relation to the leadership of the Organization.

The consensus principle, fundamental to the OSCE, forms the foundation of our collaborative decisions. We must guard against its misuse for individual agendas, as this undermines our shared trust and co-operation.

We would like to request that the full interpretative statement be attached to the decision and reflected in the journal of the day.”

MC.DEC/4/23  
1 December 2023  
Attachment 5

Original: ENGLISH

**INTERPRETATIVE STATEMENT UNDER  
PARAGRAPH IV.1(A)6 OF THE RULES OF PROCEDURE  
OF THE ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY AND  
CO-OPERATION IN EUROPE**

By the delegation of the United Kingdom:

“Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

In connection with the approval of the Ministerial Council decision on the appointment of the Director of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, the United Kingdom would like to make the following interpretative statement under paragraph IV.1(A)6 of the OSCE Rules of Procedure.

The United Kingdom joins the consensus on the extension of the appointment of the Director and wishes him every success. We particularly appreciate his willingness to continue in this important role – at such a late stage. We offer the United Kingdom’s full support and encourage others to do the same.

The United Kingdom regrets that we have had to adopt these decisions as exceptional temporary measures.

However, we note that, along with the new Chairmanship and other leadership positions, this decision supports the predictability and stability of the OSCE, at a particularly difficult time.

Mr. Chairperson, I request that this interpretative statement be attached to this decision and included in the journal of the day.”

MC.DEC/4/23  
1 December 2023  
Attachment 6

Original: ENGLISH

**INTERPRETATIVE STATEMENT UNDER  
PARAGRAPH IV.1(A)6 OF THE RULES OF PROCEDURE  
OF THE ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY AND  
CO-OPERATION IN EUROPE**

By the delegation of Armenia:

“Mr. Chairperson,

The delegation of the Republic of Armenia would like to make the following interpretative statement under paragraph IV.1(A)6 of the Rules of Procedure of the OSCE in connection with the adoption of the Ministerial Council decision on the appointment of the Director of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR).

Being driven by the interest of the Organization and cognizant of the importance of preserving functionality, integrity and the ability to continue the mandated work of the OSCE and its institutions, the Republic of Armenia is joining the consensus with the understanding that the dysfunctionality and shortcomings of institutions will no longer be tolerated, and the leadership of the ODIHR will use this term to rectify the failures in discharging the mandate.

We would like to urge the upcoming Chairmanship, Malta, to use this extension period for issuing the respective vacancy notice for the position of the Director of the ODIHR in a timely manner in order to provide an opportunity for the participating States to appoint a Director under whose leadership the ODIHR would make essential contributions to building a secure and safer future for our region by protecting and promoting human rights, in line with its mandate.

I kindly ask this interpretative statement to be attached to the decision adopted and reflected in the journal of the day.

Thank you.”





**Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe  
Ministerial Council  
Skopje 2023**

MC.DEC/5/23  
1 December 2023

Original: ENGLISH

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**Second day of the Thirtieth Meeting**  
MC(30) Journal, Agenda item 7

**DECISION No. 5/23  
EXTENSION OF THE APPOINTMENT OF THE  
OSCE HIGH COMMISSIONER ON NATIONAL MINORITIES**

The Ministerial Council,

Recalling the decision of the CSCE Helsinki Summit 1992 to establish a High Commissioner on National Minorities,

Reaffirming the necessity that the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities carries out his functions in full compliance with the OSCE principles, commitments and decisions as well as with the mandate of the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities,

Considering that the term of office of the current OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities, Mr. Kairat Abdrakhmanov, comes to an end on 3 December 2023,

Decides that, as an exceptional temporary measure aimed at ensuring an essential level of leadership for the institution of the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities when appointment for the regular period is not feasible, Mr. Kairat Abdrakhmanov shall remain in office as the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities until 3 September 2024.

MC.DEC/5/23  
1 December 2023  
Attachment 1

Original: ENGLISH

**INTERPRETATIVE STATEMENT UNDER  
PARAGRAPH IV.1(A)6 OF THE RULES OF PROCEDURE  
OF THE ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY AND  
CO-OPERATION IN EUROPE**

By the delegation of the United States of America:

“In connection with the adoption of the decision on the appointment of the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities (HCNM), the United States would like to make the following interpretative statement under paragraph IV.1(A)6 of the OSCE Rules of Procedure.

The United States welcomes the extension of the term of High Commissioner on National Minorities Kairat Abdrakhmanov. While we joined consensus on this decision as an exceptional temporary measure in the interest of ensuring continued leadership of the OSCE, this should have been a regular three-year extension. This decision does not set a precedent for future appointments or extensions of the term of the HCNM.

We fully respect the autonomy and support the work of the HCNM. Unfortunately, in recent years, there has been pressure from some participating States to weaken the OSCE’s autonomous institutions and cut resources for them. Nothing in this decision should be interpreted to diminish the autonomy of or restrict the work of the High Commissioner on National Minorities in the full exercise of his or her mandate.

Finally, the United States underscores that it is the OSCE participating States which have adopted the OSCE’s principles, commitments and decisions and it is first and foremost the responsibility of participating States to implement them.

I request that this interpretative statement be attached to the decision and that it be included in the journal of the day.”

MC.DEC/5/23  
1 December 2023  
Attachment 2

ENGLISH  
Original: RUSSIAN

**INTERPRETATIVE STATEMENT UNDER  
PARAGRAPH IV.1(A)6 OF THE RULES OF PROCEDURE  
OF THE ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY AND  
CO-OPERATION IN EUROPE**

By the delegation of the Russian Federation:

“Having joined the consensus regarding the extension of the term of office of the High Commissioner on National Minorities, the Russian Federation emphasizes the exceptional nature of this decision, which does not relieve the head of this OSCE executive structure of the responsibility for strict compliance with its mandate as approved by the participating States of the Organization.

It is our understanding that the incoming Maltese Chairmanship will launch without delay in early 2024 a competition procedure to fill the position in question.

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

MC.DEC/5/23  
1 December 2023  
Attachment 3

Original: ENGLISH

**INTERPRETATIVE STATEMENT UNDER  
PARAGRAPH IV.1(A)6 OF THE RULES OF PROCEDURE  
OF THE ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY AND  
CO-OPERATION IN EUROPE**

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

“In connection with the adoption of the decision on the extension of the mandate of the High Commissioner on National Minorities, Mr. Kairat Abdrakhmanov, the European Union would like to make the following interpretative statement under paragraph IV.1(A)6 of the OSCE Rules of Procedure:

The European Union fully supports the extension of the mandates for all four top leadership positions. This approach ensures the proper functioning of the Organization and its comprehensive approach to security, especially in these challenging times, marked by Russia’s ongoing war of aggression against Ukraine.

The European Union welcomes the extension of the mandate for Mr. Kairat Abdrakhmanov. We fully support the work of the High Commissioner on National Minorities.

However, we express deep regret that, due to the position of one participating State, consensus was blocked for both a three-year renewal as provided by the Rules of Procedure and a one-year extension proposed by the Chairmanship as a compromise solution.

We consider that a nine-month extension is an exceptional measure that falls short of ensuring the necessary continuity and an essential level of sound administration. We emphasize that this, in no way, sets a precedent for the future.

We call upon all participating States to recognize the importance of providing the OSCE with continuity under strong leadership, particularly when its principles, commitments and values are more crucial than ever for our common security.

We request that this interpretative statement be attached to the decision and included in the journal of the day.

The candidate countries North Macedonia<sup>1</sup>, Montenegro<sup>1</sup>, Albania<sup>1</sup>, Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, and Bosnia and Herzegovina<sup>1</sup>, the potential candidate country Georgia, as well as Andorra align themselves with this statement.”

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

MC.DEC/5/23  
1 December 2023  
Attachment 4

Original: ENGLISH

**INTERPRETATIVE STATEMENT UNDER  
PARAGRAPH IV.1(A)6 OF THE RULES OF PROCEDURE  
OF THE ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY AND  
CO-OPERATION IN EUROPE**

By the delegation of Canada (also on behalf of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Iceland, Monaco, Montenegro, Norway, Liechtenstein, Switzerland and Ukraine):

“I am speaking on behalf of the following countries Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Iceland, Monaco, Montenegro, Norway, Liechtenstein, Switzerland, Ukraine, and my own country Canada – in relation to the decision on the extension of the appointment of the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities, Mr. Kairat Abdrakhmanov. In this context, we wish to make the following interpretative statement under paragraph IV.1(A)6 of the OSCE Rules of Procedure:

Our delegations endorse these decisions and reiterate our gratitude to North Macedonia’s Chairmanship for their exceptional leadership in forging consensus on critical issues, thereby enhancing the OSCE’s effectiveness.

We would like to express appreciation for and our trust in the current leadership of the executive structures. Our position has long been that we would support a full renewal of all four mandates for three years.

We deeply regret that consensus for a three-year renewal could not be reached. In the spirit of co-operation, we support the current shorter extension as a temporary and exceptional measure but this should in no way be seen as setting a precedent for future decisions in relation to the leadership of the Organization.

The consensus principle, fundamental to the OSCE, forms the foundation of our collaborative decisions. We must guard against its misuse for individual agendas, as this undermines our shared trust and co-operation.

We would like to request that this statement be attached to the decision and reflected in the journal of the day.”

MC.DEC/5/23  
1 December 2023  
Attachment 5

Original: ENGLISH

**INTERPRETATIVE STATEMENT UNDER  
PARAGRAPH IV.1(A)6 OF THE RULES OF PROCEDURE  
OF THE ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY AND  
CO-OPERATION IN EUROPE**

By the delegation of the United Kingdom:

“Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

In connection with the approval of the Ministerial Council decision on the extension of the appointment of the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities, the United Kingdom would like to make the following interpretative statement under paragraph IV.1(A)6 of the OSCE Rules of Procedure.

The United Kingdom joins the consensus on the extension of the appointment of the OSCE High Commissioner and wishes him every success. We particularly appreciate his willingness to continue in this important role – at such a late stage. We offer the United Kingdom’s full support and encourage others to do the same.

The United Kingdom regrets that we have had to adopt these decisions as exceptional temporary measures.

However, we note that, along with the new Chairmanship and other leadership positions, this decision supports the predictability and stability of the OSCE, at a particularly difficult time.

Mr. Chairperson, I request that this interpretative statement be attached to this decision and included in the journal of the day.”



**Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe  
Ministerial Council  
Skopje 2023**

MC.DEC/6/23  
1 December 2023

Original: ENGLISH

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**Second day of the Thirtieth Meeting**  
MC(30) Journal, Agenda item 7

**DECISION No. 6/23  
EXTENSION OF THE APPOINTMENT OF THE  
OSCE REPRESENTATIVE ON FREEDOM OF THE MEDIA**

The Ministerial Council,

Recalling Permanent Council Decision No. 193 of 5 November 1997 on establishing an OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media,

Reaffirming the necessity that the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media carries out her functions in full compliance with the OSCE principles, commitments and decisions as well as with the mandate of the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media,

Considering that the term of office of the current OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, Ms. Teresa Ribeiro, comes to an end on 3 December 2023,

Decides that, as an exceptional temporary measure aimed at ensuring an essential level of leadership for the institution of the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media when appointment for the regular period is not feasible, Ms. Teresa Ribeiro shall remain in office as the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media until 3 September 2024.



MC.DEC/6/23  
1 December 2023  
Attachment 1

Original: ENGLISH

**INTERPRETATIVE STATEMENT UNDER  
PARAGRAPH IV.1(A)6 OF THE RULES OF PROCEDURE  
OF THE ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY AND  
CO-OPERATION IN EUROPE**

By the delegation of the United States of America:

“In connection with the adoption of the decision on the appointment of the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, the United States would like to make the following interpretative statement under paragraph IV.1(A)6 of the OSCE Rules of Procedure.

The United States welcomes the extension of the term of Representative on Freedom of the Media Maria Teresa Ribeiro. While we joined consensus on this decision as an exceptional temporary measure in the interest of ensuring continued leadership of the OSCE, this should have been a regular three-year extension. This decision does not set a precedent for future appointments or extensions of the term of the Representative on Freedom of the Media.

We fully respect the autonomy and support the work of the Representative on Freedom of the Media. Unfortunately, in recent years, there has been pressure from some participating States to weaken the OSCE’s autonomous institutions and cut resources for them. Nothing in this decision should be interpreted to diminish the autonomy of or restrict the work of the Representative on Freedom of the Media in the full exercise of his or her mandate.

Finally, the United States underscores that it is the OSCE participating States which have adopted the OSCE’s principles, commitments and decisions and it is first and foremost the responsibility of the participating States to implement them.

I request that this interpretative statement be attached to the decision and that it be included in the journal of the day.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.”

MC.DEC/6/23  
1 December 2023  
Attachment 2

ENGLISH  
Original: RUSSIAN

**INTERPRETATIVE STATEMENT UNDER  
PARAGRAPH IV.1(A)6 OF THE RULES OF PROCEDURE  
OF THE ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY AND  
CO-OPERATION IN EUROPE**

By the delegation of the Russian Federation:

“Having joined the consensus regarding the extension of the term of office of the Representative on Freedom of the Media, the Russian Federation emphasizes the exceptional nature of this decision, which does not relieve the head of this OSCE executive structure of the responsibility for strict compliance with its mandate as approved by the participating States of the Organization.

It is our understanding that the incoming Maltese Chairmanship will launch without delay in early 2024 a competition procedure to fill the position in question.

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

MC.DEC/6/23  
1 December 2023  
Attachment 3

Original: ENGLISH

**INTERPRETATIVE STATEMENT UNDER  
PARAGRAPH IV.1(A)6 OF THE RULES OF PROCEDURE  
OF THE ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY AND  
CO-OPERATION IN EUROPE**

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

“In connection with the adoption of the decision on the extension of the mandate of the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, Ms. Teresa Ribeiro, the European Union would like to make the following interpretative statement under paragraph IV.1(A)6 of the OSCE Rules of Procedure:

The European Union fully supports the extension of the mandates for all four top leadership positions. This approach ensures the proper functioning of the Organization and its comprehensive approach to security, especially in these challenging times, marked by Russia’s ongoing war of aggression against Ukraine.

The European Union welcomes the extension of the mandate for Ms. Teresa Ribeiro. We fully support the work of the Representative on Freedom of the Media.

However, we express deep regret that, due to the position of one participating State, consensus was blocked for both a three-year renewal as provided by the Rules of Procedure and a one-year extension proposed by the Chairmanship as a compromise solution.

We consider that a nine-month extension is an exceptional measure that falls short of ensuring the necessary continuity and an essential level of sound administration of the Representative on Freedom of the Media’s Office. We emphasize that this, in no way, sets a precedent for the future.

We call upon all participating States to recognize the importance of providing the OSCE with continuity under strong leadership, particularly when its principles, commitments and values are more crucial than ever for our common security.

We request that this interpretative statement be attached to the decision and included in the journal of the day.

The candidate countries North Macedonia<sup>1</sup>, Montenegro<sup>1</sup>, Albania<sup>1</sup>, Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, and Bosnia and Herzegovina<sup>1</sup>, the potential candidate country Georgia, as well as Andorra align themselves with this statement.”

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

MC.DEC/6/23  
1 December 2023  
Attachment 4

Original: ENGLISH

**INTERPRETATIVE STATEMENT UNDER  
PARAGRAPH IV.1(A)6 OF THE RULES OF PROCEDURE  
OF THE ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY AND  
CO-OPERATION IN EUROPE**

By the delegation of Canada (also on behalf of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Monaco, Montenegro, Norway, Switzerland and Ukraine):

“I am speaking on behalf of the following countries – Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Monaco, Montenegro, Norway, Switzerland, Ukraine, and my own country Canada – in relation to the decision on the extension of the appointment of the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, Ms. Teresa Ribeiro. In this context, we wish to make the following interpretative statement under paragraph IV.1(A)6 of the OSCE Rules of Procedure:

Our delegations endorse these decisions and reiterate our gratitude to North Macedonia’s Chairmanship for their exceptional leadership in forging consensus on critical issues, thereby enhancing the OSCE’s effectiveness.

We would like to express our appreciation for and trust in the current leadership of the executive structures. Our position has long been that we would support a full renewal of all four mandates for three years.

We deeply regret that consensus for a three-year renewal could not be reached. In the spirit of co-operation, we support the current shorter extension as a temporary and exceptional measure, but this should in no way be seen as setting a precedent for future decisions in relation to the leadership of the Organization.

The consensus principle, fundamental to the OSCE, forms the foundation of our collaborative decisions. We must guard against its misuse for individual agendas, as this undermines our shared trust and co-operation.

We would like to request that this statement be attached to the decision and reflected in the journal of the day.”

MC.DEC/6/23  
1 December 2023  
Attachment 5

Original: ENGLISH

**INTERPRETATIVE STATEMENT UNDER  
PARAGRAPH IV.1(A)6 OF THE RULES OF PROCEDURE  
OF THE ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY AND  
CO-OPERATION IN EUROPE**

By the delegation of the United Kingdom:

“Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

In connection with the approval of the Ministerial Council decision on the extension of the appointment of the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, the United Kingdom would like to make the following interpretative statement under paragraph IV.1(A)6 of the OSCE Rules of Procedure.

The United Kingdom joins the consensus on the extension of the appointment of the OSCE Representative and wishes her every success. We particularly appreciate her willingness to continue in this important role – at such a late stage. We offer the United Kingdom’s full support and encourage others to do the same.

The United Kingdom regrets that we have had to adopt these decisions as exceptional temporary measures.

However, we note that, along with the new Chairmanship and other leadership positions, this decision supports the predictability and stability of the OSCE, at a particularly difficult time.

Mr. Chairperson, I request that this interpretative statement be attached to this decision and included in the journal of the day.”