

**Address by H.E. Mr. Jacek Czaputowicz, Minister of Foreign Affairs of  
Poland**

**25<sup>th</sup> OSCE Ministerial Council**

**Milan, December 6<sup>th</sup> 2018**

*Mr. Chairperson-in-Office, Mr. Secretary General, Excellencies, Ladies and gentlemen,*

Let me join the previous speakers in thanking the Italian Chairmanship for their yearlong work at the helm of this Organization.

We know that the times are quite challenging these days. If OSCE is to live up to its highly valued commitments **there can be no dispute over fundamental issues**.

Among the challenges the organization is confronting today none is more devastating to the security and humanitarian environment in the OSCE area than the Russian aggression against Ukraine. So far it brought about more than 10 thousand killed and 1.5 million displaced.

**Resolving the conflict between Russia and Ukraine is indispensable for re-establishing European security**. Poland will not recognize Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea. Neither will we accept the continuous destabilization of eastern Ukraine.

We are concerned about recent acts that undermine efforts to resolve the conflict, such as the so-called "elections" in eastern Ukraine, which openly defied the Minsk agreements.

We are particularly worried about the restrictions in the freedom of passage to the Sea of Azov, as well as the recent illegal use of military force against three Ukrainian ships and the capture of 24 members of the naval personnel.

Poland underlines the **necessity to ensure safety of the SMM monitors and assets**, as well as **their unhindered access to the entire territory of Ukraine**. Steps also must be taken to strengthen the monitoring of the Ukrainian-Russian border and to ensure additional international presence in the conflict area.

This year saw the **tenth anniversary of Russian aggression against Georgia**. Here, I would like to reaffirm Poland's unwavering support for Georgia's sovereignty and territorial integrity. We condemn Russia's intensive militarization and the steps it has been taking towards factual annexation of the Georgia's breakaway regions.

We must reduce urgently any possible risk of further escalating tensions through refraining from menacing military actions.

Large-scale, no-notice **military manoeuvres along international borders**, with offensive scenarios as well as mounting militarization of Kaliningrad and Crimea undermine trust and create tensions in the OSCE area.

We should remain committed to the full **implementation - in letter and spirit - of existing commitments in the politico-military dimension**. The **Vienna Document** should be modernized to address the issue of hazardous military incidents. We believe this is an optimal way to reduce risks, enhance transparency and ease tensions. We regret that the draft decision on military transparency, risk reduction and incident prevention, which included the vital reference to the modernization of the Vienna Document, has not been adopted.

Poland reiterates its full support to **promoting democratic standards and safeguarding human rights and fundamental freedoms**.

Open outreach to civil society has for long been one of the main assets of the human dimension. It is therefore indispensable to ensure that the **annual calendar of human dimension** events remains solid and that concerns regarding organisational matters do not affect the cycle itself.

*Ladies and gentlemen,*

Let me again congratulate Italian presidency and wish all success to the upcoming Slovak Chairmanship. I assure you Minister Miroslav Lajčák of Poland's full support in your endeavour. I also congratulate Albania on their OSCE Chairmanship in 2020.