

AS DELIVERED

STATEMENT

by the State Secretary for Foreign Policy of Denmark
Her Excellency Lone Dencker Wisborg at the Plenary Session of the 23rd OSCE
Ministerial Council
8 December 2016, Hamburg

Denmark fully subscribes to the statement delivered by High Representative Mogherini on behalf of the EU.

We are convening at a particularly challenging time: A time of conflict. Distrust. Tension. Where fundamental OSCE principles are breached and human rights increasingly violated and called into question.

A time of extraordinary flows of migrants and refugees. At time when the scourge of terrorism remains ever present.

In this time, the answer is not to adapt to our common rules. The answer is to abide by them.

Let me focus on three issues: Ukraine, human rights and arms control.

First, we recall our unwavering support for the sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders. We urge Russia to do the same. We condemn the illegal annexation of Crimea, which we will not recognise.

We repeat our call on all sides to contribute to reaching a sustainable political solution in line with OSCE principles and commitments. We stress Russia's responsibility in this regard.

We reiterate our strong support for the SMM. All participating States have committed themselves to supporting the SMM, yet the Mission monitors – *our monitors* – continue to be obstructed on a daily basis, particularly in separatist-held areas. It is high time these commitments are turned into action.

Second, we are alarmed by the increasing violations on human rights and pressure on democratic values, key components of the comprehensive concept of security. Just a few years ago the sheer scope of human rights violations, including the shrinking space for civil society, would have been unimaginable. We must reverse this course. We will remain at the forefront in the OSCE of efforts to eradicate torture, protect and promote freedom of expression, and counter propaganda. We also reiterate our strong support for the autonomous institutions, their mandates and their independence.

Denmark has presented our candidature for the Human Rights Council for the period 2019-2021. The Council is an important body for promoting and protecting human rights which draws its legitimacy from its representations of all regions. We are eager to contribute more profoundly to the important work of the Council.

We look forward to engaging in dialogue with the OSCE and all of you - with the aim of achieving progress within the human rights agenda that will benefit us all.

Third, with increasing military tension in Europe, not least in the Baltic Sea Region, we welcome all efforts to strengthen arms control. The current situation calls for measures to reduce risks and to enhance confidence-building. Such efforts must build upon existing principles and complement efforts to fully implement and modernise our existing instruments. As we mark the 20th anniversary of the Lisbon Framework, we hope Hamburg will send a strong signal in favour of more, not less, transparency.

We thank the German Chairmanship for our close cooperation and for taking the helm of the OSCE at a challenging time. We look forward to closely cooperating with the incoming Austrian Chairmanship.

Thank you.