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1010 Vienna
Austria

Ireland's National Statement - OSCE Ministerial Council Plenary

30 November 2023

Mr. Chair, Dear Minister Osmani,

Ireland fully aligns with the statement made by the High Representative on behalf of the European Union. These remarks are made in our national capacity.

Minister Osmani, let me express our sincere thanks for your leadership and commitment to leading the OSCE over the past year. You and your team have shown the importance of perseverance and positivity in challenging circumstances. I would also like to thank you for bringing participating States together here in Skopje.

I am very grateful to OSCE Secretary General, Helga Schmid for her leadership, commitment and resilience. I would like to thank the ODIHR Director, the Representative on Freedom of the Media and the High Commissioner for National Minorities for their excellent work which we greatly value. I also wish to put on record my appreciation for the work of the staff of the OSCE Secretariat, field missions and autonomous institutions. Their efforts on our behalf are greatly appreciated.

Let me welcome the next Chair-in-Office, Mr Ian Borg, Minister of Foreign and European Affairs and Trade of Malta, and assure him and his team of our full support. Ireland is grateful to Malta for stepping up to take on this role at a critical time for our Organisation.

Minister Osmani, you emphasised that the OSCE is about people. The Russian Federation's unprovoked and unjustified war of aggression against Ukraine continues to wreak devastation on the country and its people. The list of those who have been killed or maimed continues to grow. Entire communities, homes, schools, hospitals and other civilian objects continue to be destroyed. Millions of people have been displaced. Children have been forcibly deported and civilians detained for no reason. Many are subjected to horrifying torture and sexual violence by Russia's forces. At the Warsaw Human Dimension Conference in October, we heard the chilling testimonies of civilians who have been arbitrarily and illegally detained by Russia. There is no justification for Russia's actions in Ukraine.

The people of Ukraine are suffering the awful consequences of severe environmental damage, including the long term impacts of the destruction of the Kahovka Dam and the widespread use of land mines and unexploded ordnance.

Russia's ongoing attacks on civilian infrastructure, its threats to Ukrainian nuclear facilities and its decision to withdraw from the Black Sea Grain Initiative demonstrate Moscow's contempt for the people of Ukraine and wider regional and global security.

Ireland condemns Russia's heinous attacks in the strongest possible terms. We call on the Russian Federation to immediately and unconditionally withdraw from Ukraine and release all detainees including the three OSCE SMM personnel unjustly detained for more than a year and a half.

Let me reiterate Ireland's solidarity with the Government and people of Ukraine as they defend themselves against Russia's unprovoked aggression. Ireland will work with international partners to ensure accountability and to restore essential civilian infrastructure. Ireland will also continue to be a strong advocate for Ukraine's EU membership aspirations.

Regrettably, the number of people affected by or at risk of being impacted by conflict in the OSCE area continues to grow. Implementation of OSCE commitments in all dimensions is the best route to improve the lives of citizens in the OSCE area. Ensuring the full, equal and meaningful participation of women is crucial. We must implement a gender-responsive approach in all our work.

Mr Chair,

The OSCE, an organisation we greatly value, has been without a unified budget since 2021, despite delivering sustainable results and very good value for money. For the organisation to flourish, it needs an approved budget and adequate resources. I urge all participating States to adequately fund its important work and place the organisation on a more sustainable footing.

Thank you, Mr Chair