



ROYAL NORWEGIAN  
MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

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ENGLISH only

As delivered by H.E. Børge Brende,  
Minister of Foreign Affairs of Norway,  
at the 23rd OSCE Ministerial Council Meeting  
Hamburg, 8 December 2016

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Thank you Mr Chair,

At the Astana Summit in 2010 we shared the vision of a free, democratic, common and indivisible security community.

The true path to security is through trust, cooperation and respect for the rules of the game.

However, the very values and institutions that have provided the basis for our security and prosperity for so long are increasingly coming under pressure.

We find ourselves in times of crisis and in a changing security landscape.

One of the institutions under pressure is the OSCE. At the same time, these times of crisis also mean that the OSCE is more important than ever.

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Germany started its OSCE chairmanship with the slogan: Renewing dialogue, rebuilding trust, restoring security.

Praiseworthy objectives indeed, but the very fact that we need to strive towards them highlights the fact that we are failing to comply with international norms and our OSCE commitments.

Colleagues, we need to remind ourselves that the very essence of the OSCE is dialogue, trust and security.

We also need to remind ourselves of our commitments.

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The conflict in Eastern Ukraine is the result of a breach of these principles and commitments. It can only be resolved by restoring respect for those principles and the full implementation of the Minsk agreement.

The OSCE responded well to the conflict. It stepped up to the plate. The relevance of the OSCE has been strengthened.

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I commend the Special Monitoring Mission (SMM) for its impressive work in the face of considerable challenges.

I reiterate that the SMM must have full, unrestrained access to all areas of Ukraine (including Ukraine's border with Russia).

The lack of progress in other protracted conflicts – in Georgia, Moldova and Azerbaijan – shows the need for strengthening the OSCE's conflict cycle toolbox.

The greatest strength of our organisation is its field presence. This is demonstrated every day from the Western Balkans to Central Asia where both old and evolving challenges warrant our close engagement.

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Arms control and confidence- and security-building measures are integral to the OSCE's comprehensive and cooperative concept of security. This includes the principles of territorial integrity, free choice of alliances, and recognition of international law.

We welcome the proposal to establish an inclusive structured dialogue on security within the OSCE framework.

Closing the gender gap, ensuring inclusive peace processes, and preventing violence against women will increase security for us all.

The OSCE should do more on the Women, Peace and Security agenda.

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The OSCE's institutions assist us all in fulfilling the rights of our citizens. Any attempt to restrict their mandates or capacities is a matter of concern for us all. We should rather ensure that the organisation has adequate resources.

There can be no lasting security and stability without respect for human rights. Civil society is an indispensable partner in building democratic and prosperous societies.

It is time we returned to the vision from Astana.