

STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF CANADA

Mr. Chairperson,

The Ministerial Council just adopted eight substantive decisions. Canada had hoped for decisions on important topics in the human dimension, notably on freedom of expression, gender, combating hate crimes and adopting a non-legally binding definition of antisemitism. For us, the protection of human rights and the promotion of respect for diversity must remain at the core of the OSCE's comprehensive approach to security. As Minister Dion said yesterday, in a period when the winds of mistrust, fear and even xenophobia are blowing over our region, we must remain faithful to these shared principles.

Despite the inability to adopt these decisions, we are convinced that the well-established OSCE commitments and principles we have all agreed on must continue to guide our collective action, and we salute the contribution made by our OSCE autonomous institutions in this regard. Their work is essential and we regret that the leadership of two of those institutions remains in doubt.

Mr. Chairperson,

One of the fundamental principles of the OSCE is respect for territorial integrity, and we reiterate that we oppose recent attempts to redefine European borders by force. We regret that consensus was blocked by one participating State on declarations on the crisis in and around Ukraine and on Georgia, both of which must remain at the very top of our organization's agenda.

We take this opportunity to express our strong support for the OSCE's essential contribution to ensuring a sustainable political solution to the conflict in eastern Ukraine, in line with OSCE principles and commitments including by facilitating the full implementation of the Minsk agreements. We salute once again the work of the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine and reiterate our full support for their work in support of peace and stability. We reaffirm our unwavering support for Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity within its recognized borders, as well as the fact that Canada does not and will not recognize the illegal annexation of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea, which remains an integral part of Ukraine.

Mr. Chairperson,

In closing, my delegation thanks you and the entire team of the 2016 OSCE Chairmanship for your efforts throughout the year and for your warm hospitality in Hamburg. Canada looks forward to working closely with Austria as it takes over the Chairmanship of our Organization in 2017 and to meeting in Vienna next year.

I would ask that this statement be reflected in the journal of the day.

Thank you.