



**Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe  
Ministerial Council**

MC.DEC/1/17  
18 July 2017

Original: ENGLISH

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**DECISION No. 1/17  
APPOINTMENT OF THE OSCE HIGH COMMISSIONER ON  
NATIONAL MINORITIES**

The Ministerial Council,

Recalling the decision of the CSCE Helsinki Summit 1992 to establish a High Commissioner on National Minorities,

Reaffirming the necessity that the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities carries out his functions in full compliance with the OSCE principles, commitments and decisions as well as with the mandate of the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities,

Considering that the term of office of the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities, Ms. Astrid Thors, came to an end on 19 August 2016,

Taking into consideration the recommendation of the Permanent Council,

Decides to appoint Mr. Lamberto Zannier as OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities for a period of three years with effect from 19 July 2017.

MC.DEC/1/17  
18 July 2017  
Attachment 1

Original: ENGLISH

**INTERPRETATIVE STATEMENT UNDER  
PARAGRAPH IV.1(A)6 OF THE RULES OF PROCEDURE  
OF THE ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY AND  
CO-OPERATION IN EUROPE**

By the delegation of Kazakhstan:

“Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

The delegation of Kazakhstan would like to make the following interpretative statement under paragraph IV.1(A)6 of the OSCE Rules of Procedure in connection with the adoption of Ministerial Council decisions on the appointments of a new OSCE Secretary General and new heads of institutions.

We welcome the fact that eventually we reached consensus on this matter and appreciate all efforts of the Austrian Chairmanship regarding these appointments. Although, the decisions were not adopted in due time.

Let me warmly welcome Mr. Thomas Greminger (Switzerland) as OSCE Secretary General; Ms. Ingibjörg Sólrún Gísladóttir (Iceland) as Director of OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights; Mr. Lamberto Zannier (Italy) as OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities; and Mr. Harlem Désir (France) as OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media to the Permanent Council meeting and congratulate them on respective appointments. I would like to wish all the success to all of you in your new capacities.

At the same time, we regretfully note the absence of fair geographical balance among leading representatives of the OSCE, not only among newly appointed heads of institutions, but also historically among previous incumbents since the very establishment of the OSCE. We hope that this practice will be halted in the future.

For this, we encourage to use a GRIP approach, where G stands for Gender Balance, R stands for Regional Balance, I stands for Interfaith Balance and P stands for Professional Balance.

From the procedural prospective, we note the “broad interpretation” of existing established practice of candidates’ nomination, although we understand that the Chairmanship has done that for the sake of consensus.

We call on all participating States to ensure further institutionalization of our Organization through the adoption of the OSCE Charter which will contain, *inter alia*, a clear

set of rules and procedures related to the processes of nomination, selection and appointment to the OSCE leading posts. We are confident that it will help us to avoid the burdens of last selection process in the year 2016–2017.

Mr. Chairperson, I request that this interpretative statement be attached to all four decisions and included in the journal of the day.”

MC.DEC/1/17  
18 July 2017  
Attachment 2

ENGLISH  
Original: RUSSIAN

**INTERPRETATIVE STATEMENT UNDER  
PARAGRAPH IV.1(A)6 OF THE RULES OF PROCEDURE  
OF THE ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY AND  
CO-OPERATION IN EUROPE**

By the delegation of the Russian Federation (also on behalf of Armenia, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan):

“Our countries joined the consensus on the decisions by the OSCE Ministers for Foreign Affairs on the appointment of the new OSCE Secretary General, the new Director of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, the new High Commissioner on National Minorities and the new Representative on Freedom of the Media, the silence procedure for which expired on 18 July. Thus, from 19 July, Mr. Thomas Greminger assumed responsibilities as the new Secretary General, Ms. Ingibjörg Sólrún Gísladóttir as the new Director of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, Mr. Lamberto Zannier as the new High Commissioner on National Minorities and Mr. Harlem Désir as the new Representative on Freedom of the Media. We congratulate them on their lofty appointments. We wish them every success in their responsible positions.

At the same time, we should like to point out the unacceptability of the situation in which throughout all the years of the OSCE’s existence there has never been a single representative of our countries in the leadership of its executive structures. Steps need to be taken to rectify such a bias, which contravenes the fundamental principles of the OSCE’s work and its procedural norms establishing the equality of all participating States and their equal opportunity to be involved in the leadership of the Secretariat, its departments and the institutions of the Organization.

We trust that in future appointments to leading positions in the OSCE executive structures our concerns will be fully taken into account.

We hope that the aforementioned executive structures will work effectively in strict accordance with their mandates and taking into account the opinions of all participating States and also on the basis of a constructive approach on the part of the newly appointed heads.

I request that this statement be appended to all the decisions adopted, and included in the journal of the day.”

MC.DEC/1/17  
18 July 2017  
Attachment 3

Original: ENGLISH

**INTERPRETATIVE STATEMENT UNDER  
PARAGRAPH IV.1(A)6 OF THE RULES OF PROCEDURE  
OF THE ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY AND  
CO-OPERATION IN EUROPE**

By the delegation of the United States of America:

“Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

In connection with the adoption of the decision for the appointment of the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities (HCNM), the United States would like to make the following interpretative statement under paragraph IV.1(A)6 of the OSCE Rules of Procedure.

The United States welcomes the appointment of Ambassador Lamberto Zannier. We fully respect the autonomy and support the work of the HCNM.

Unfortunately, in recent years, there has been pressure from some participating States to weaken the OSCE’s autonomous institutions and cut resources for them. Nothing in this decision should be interpreted to diminish the autonomy of or restrict the work of the High Commissioner on National Minorities in the exercise of his or her mandate.

Finally, the United States underscores that it is the OSCE participating States which have adopted our principles, commitments and decisions and it is first and foremost the responsibility of participating States to implement them.

I request that this interpretative statement be attached to the decision and that it be included in the journal of the day.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.”

MC.DEC/1/17  
18 July 2017  
Attachment 4

Original: ENGLISH

**INTERPRETATIVE STATEMENT UNDER  
PARAGRAPH IV.1(A)6 OF THE RULES OF PROCEDURE  
OF THE ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY AND  
CO-OPERATION IN EUROPE**

By the delegation of Azerbaijan:

“While joining the consensus on the Ministerial Council decision on the appointment of the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities, the delegation of the Republic of Azerbaijan would like to make an interpretative statement under paragraph IV.1(A)6 of the Rules of Procedure of the OSCE.

The delegation of the Republic of Azerbaijan continues to be of the strong view that the OSCE executive structures and field missions are the common assets of all 57 OSCE participating States, providing that they act in full compliance with the OSCE principles, commitments and decisions as well as with their respective mandates and by no means harm the legitimate interests of participating States. Principles of accountability, transparency and efficiency, as well as scrupulous implementation of their respective mandates by heads of the institutions and field missions are the prerequisites for extending collective support of participating States to activities of OSCE institutions and field missions.

Furthermore, selection of the candidates for leadership positions within the Organization revealed once again already intolerable geographic imbalance in OSCE recruitment process. It underscored the urgent need to improve fair geographic representation within the Organization’s executive structures from unrepresented participating States.

The decision in no way sets a precedent and we strongly encourage the current Austrian and incoming Italian OSCE Chairmanships to submit promptly a proposal on establishing a mechanism that would ensure stronger application in practice of the principle of fair geographic distribution of posts in OSCE. This will help ensuring a sense of ownership of the Organization and rebuilding trust and confidence in the OSCE. Such a mechanism will assist participating States in proper planning and nominating candidates for vacancies, including for the next selection process of heads of OSCE executive structures.

The delegation of the Republic of Azerbaijan requests that this statement be attached to the adopted decision and be included in the journal of the day.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.”