



**Government Offices of Sweden**

**Statement by Director-General for Political Affairs of the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Amb. Elinor Hammar skjöld, at the OSCE Annual Security Review Conference, 29 June 2022**

Excellencies, dear colleagues,

Sweden fully aligns with the statement to be delivered by the EU.

Sweden welcomes that the Annual Security Review Conference can be held this year, albeit in a special format.

I wish to thank the Polish Chairpersonship for your leadership of our organisation during this difficult time.

Sweden would also like to take this opportunity to thank the institutional structures of OSCE, including the Secretariat and ODIHR, for their highly professional work. We thank the institutions and the Secretariat for putting the European Security Order first.

We meet at a time when security in our region is more seriously challenged than in decades. It is at times like these that our multilateral institutions are needed the most, to demand and ensure adherence to our commitments.

Over the past 15 years we have seen how the actions of the Russian Federation have increasingly undermined the foundations for security that we have jointly built since the adoption of the Helsinki Final Act in 1975. First through questioning the commitments that it had voluntarily accepted, then through military aggression against Georgia in 2008 and Ukraine from 2014 and onwards.

The continued and intensified war of aggression that was launched against Ukraine on 24<sup>th</sup> February is a continuation of these destructive and dangerous policies.

The unprecedented Russian aggression has not only affected Ukraine, which is experiencing immense human suffering in the midst of war. Russia's brutal war has also caused a global food security crisis as millions of tonnes of grain are prevented from leaving Ukrainian ports. This risks causing famine for millions of people. We call on Russia to stop its illegal actions and ensure safe passage of ships that carry grain that feeds the world.

Excellencies,

The near universal condemnation of the Russian aggression against Ukraine is a sign that a strong majority of countries around the globe still act in support of the universality of international law. We saw it in March where 141 UN Member States voted to demand an end to the aggression. We have seen it in every meeting in the Permanent Council since 24<sup>th</sup> February, where an almost unanimous Council has strongly condemned the Russian acts of aggression.

We need to follow up resolutions and statements with concrete actions. There can be no impunity for war crimes. The OSCE plays an important part.

The report from the Moscow Mechanism launched in March confirmed clear patterns of Russian violations of international humanitarian law. These findings need to be followed up. Accountability needs to be ensured. Sweden is encouraged that the International Criminal Court, based on the referral of 43 countries, has launched an investigation. Those responsible for international crimes committed in Ukraine need to be brought to justice. This includes with respect to the recent indiscriminate attack at the Kremenchuk shopping mall.

Excellencies,

The Annual Security Review Conference is held to give us an opportunity to review the use and implementation of the instruments that have been created to build confidence and security between the participating States. It is clear that these instruments have been abused and misused over the past year.

The Vienna Document's chapter on risk reduction has been activated twice by participating States, based on legitimate security concerns regarding the military exercises of the Russian Federation in Belarus and close to the borders of Ukraine. The responses from both Russia and Belarus in these instances showed a disregard for both the Vienna Document, as well as the concerns of participating States.

Instead of using the opportunity for transparency, Russia denied that a military build-up was taking place. Russia clearly stated to each of us that there was no military threat. The aggression that followed openly exposed the how wrong the Russian responses were.

Excellencies,

To achieve security in conflict and crisis, our whole societies need to be involved. We know that more gender equal societies are also more peaceful and secure. During the Swedish chairpersonship last year, we saw how the agenda for Women, Peace and Security made a difference in all OSCE field presences. We continue to support its full implementation.

We are going through a challenging time for the OSCE. The shared commitments of the European security order provide us with the one and only legitimate end goal - a Ukraine free from Russian aggression; and with its territorial integrity re-established. Sweden remains committed to this goal and will do our part in support of Ukraine.

Thank you!