

Delegation of the Russian Federation

**STATEMENT BY MR. DMITRY BALAKIN,
DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE
RUSSIAN FEDERATION, AT THE 1193rd MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

19 July 2018

**In response to the presentation by
Mr. Lukáš Parížek, State Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign and
European Affairs of the Slovak Republic, on the priorities of the
2019 OSCE Chairmanship**

Mr. Chairperson,
State Secretary,

We are pleased to welcome you to the Permanent Council and thank you for outlining the priorities of the Slovak 2019 OSCE Chairmanship. Representatives of your country have already made a significant contribution to the OSCE's work. They have always been notable for their professional and constructive approach. We remember well the activities of Mr. Ján Kubiš as OSCE Secretary General and Mr. Miroslav Jenča as Head of the OSCE Centre in Tashkent, and highly appreciate the efforts of the Director of the OSCE Secretariat's Conflict Prevention Centre, Mr. Marcel Peško. We note Slovakia's successful Chairmanship of the Forum for Security Co-operation and the work of Permanent Representative Radomír Boháč as Chairperson of the Contact Group with the Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation. We hope that this unifying potential will grow.

Indeed, in today's globalized, unpredictable and polycentric world, full not only of challenges but also opportunities, it is multilateral organizations that are called upon to respond effectively to the current transnational threats. They can be confronted only if we work together, and not within individual "islands of security". It is this paradigm that forms the basis of the strategic task of building a common and indivisible Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian security community from Vancouver to Vladivostok, as defined at the last OSCE Summit in Astana in 2010.

The only way to achieve success on this path is through the abandonment of accusatory rhetoric, the open exchange of opinions and a readiness to seek compromise. It is difficult to overestimate the role of the Chairmanship. Whether we will be able to take advantage of what makes the OSCE unique or whether we will become bogged down in disagreements depends in many respects on the Chairmanship's ability to act and speak without bias and with account taken of the positions and "red lines" of all the States (this is

the mandate set out in the Porto Ministerial Council decision and Permanent Council Decision No. 485 of 28 June 2002). In that connection, it is extremely important to strengthen the dynamics of the dialogue formats already launched in the OSCE, such as the Structured Dialogue. Only in this way, step by step, assembling a unifying agenda, can we move forward and create an environment in which the conceptual discussion on the future of European security can perhaps be resumed.

Certainly, the OSCE needs to adapt. The issue of the Organization's legal status, which can be resolved only through the prompt elaboration and adoption of its constituent document (Charter), requires an immediate solution. The thematic and geographical imbalances in its activities must be rectified and efforts made to devise common rules for the work of the executive structures. It is important finally to make effective use of the OSCE's original purpose – to prevent and resolve crisis situations. It is in this area that painstaking and honest efforts will be required of the future Chairmanship to take into account in equal measure the positions of all the parties to the conflicts and support the established negotiation formats.

The top-priority challenge is to resolve the internal Ukrainian conflict. A lasting settlement is possible only through direct dialogue between the Ukrainian Government, Donetsk and Luhansk in the Trilateral Contact Group and full implementation of the Minsk Package of Measures endorsed by United Nations Security Council resolution 2202. Ukraine must finally stop shelling its own citizens in Donbas, lift the blockade in the region and grant it special status under the Constitution. We share the assessments regarding the stabilizing role of the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine, and are ready to continue to support its work in strict accordance with the current mandate.

We are also counting on the Chairmanship's assistance in the negotiations on a Transdnestrian and Nagorno-Karabakh settlement, and support for the dialogue within the framework of the Geneva International Discussions on Security in the Trans-Caucasus. The situation in the Western Balkans, particularly in the Serbian territory of Kosovo, requires greater attention, if outbreaks of violence are to be prevented.

One of the promising areas of co-operation in the OSCE is to be found in the first basket. We believe it important not to lower the bar set by the Italian Chairmanship in combating terrorism. Creating a global counter-terrorism front remains our common goal. This includes stepping up the efforts to counter the phenomenon of foreign terrorist fighters and the danger posed by their return from conflict zones. We are faced with the task of countering any support for terrorism – whether financial, logistic or ideological. We consider the fight against extremism to be exclusively in the context of counter-terrorism. It should be based on the counter-terrorism framework in international law, with the leading role played by States and their competent authorities.

We propose that the future Slovak Chairmanship raise the profile of the OSCE in combating drugs. According to the United Nations, the scale of illegal drug production and trafficking in recent years is setting new sorry records, which has a negative impact on security throughout the world and in the OSCE's area of responsibility in particular. The Organization has the necessary tools and capacity to effectively counter this threat.

We are willing to continue seeking points of convergence as regards information and communication technology security. We propose focusing on the implementation of

confidence-building measures and jointly considering how to increase the impact of the OSCE's efforts to reduce the risks of conflicts emerging in the digital environment.

As for the desire to focus more closely on the promotion of security sector reform, we take the position that the concept should be based on UN Security Council resolution 2151 on this subject. It is not universal and applies only to States emerging from conflicts or in the process of post-conflict reconstruction.

State Secretary,

We share the idea of stepping up the OSCE's activities in the economic and environmental dimension. We welcome the priorities set in the second basket. The theme of the 27th Economic and Environmental Forum "Promoting economic progress and security in the OSCE area through energy co-operation, new technologies, good governance and connectivity in the digital era" is, in our view, relevant for all participating States and allows us to make use of the second dimension's unifying potential.

The problems of energy co-operation, connectivity and good governance, including in the environmental sphere, have long been on the OSCE agenda. There is experience and successful practices. If it is possible to avoid politicizing the discussions and concentrating on talking about issues of practical importance that can be solved in the format of bilateral relations, we will be able to focus on the really massive task of building a common economic space from Vancouver to Vladivostok. It is beneficial to make use of the OSCE to expand contacts between the leading integration associations in its area of responsibility, namely the European Union and the Eurasian Economic Union.

Expanding the agenda of work in the second dimension, including by studying the consequences of the introduction of the latest technologies in the economy, may also have added value. This theme echoes the digital economy issues that the Italian Chairmanship is working on, but for the OSCE it is new and will require the involvement of the expert potential of the Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities and the intellectual resources of the participating States. We are ready to participate in the forthcoming discussions. The issues of responding to natural and man-made disasters are also important.

We are counting on continuing the efforts to optimize the OSCE's activities, correct the bias towards the humanitarian basket and eliminate the thematic imbalance in its content.

Fruitful work in this area is hampered by attempts to use human rights as an instrument of foreign policy. Any new topic in the third basket struggles to make headway. Instead of searching for ways to solve problems together, we often just hear empty moralizing. We believe that our Organization deserves better, and it was not created for that purpose.

We need to take a sober look at the situation on the ground. What is really happening? Indulgence of ultra-radical movements, the justification of neo-Nazis and their supporters, inciting racial and ethnic hatred. Instead of recognizing the obvious facts and taking appropriate measures, some States start talking about freedom of speech, while openly blocking discussion of these topics.

The persecution of media outlets because of the country they come from and the introduction of restrictive measures for expressing a particular point of view or showing unwelcome programmes remains a serious problem. Pressure on journalists for political reasons, bans on them entering the country or attending certain events, deportations and blacklists of media workers – all these anti-democratic steps have become the norm in a number of countries. Double standards in the approaches to protecting freedom of expression prevent us from putting a stop to these phenomena.

The OSCE needs to pay constant attention to issues like the protection of the rights of national minorities and children, countering trafficking in human beings, the use or justification of torture, eliminating statelessness, social and economic rights, preserving historical and cultural heritage, and discrimination in sport.

We need to take a stand in solidarity against all forms of religious fanaticism. Discussions on a working definition of anti-Semitism should be brought into line with existing practices in the field of international law, in particular the rulings of the Nuremberg Tribunal and the provisions of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination. These efforts should finally be supplemented by the elaboration of declarations on combating intolerance and discrimination against Muslims and Christians, as agreed by the participating States at the OSCE Ministerial Council meeting in Basel in 2014. The development of common standards and rules for election monitoring agreed upon by all participating States also remains a matter of urgency.

State Secretary,

Russia is committed to constructive co-operation with our friend Slovakia. We are ready to help in every way to ensure a successful OSCE Chairmanship.

We wish you all the best.