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**STATEMENT BY MS. MARINA SERENI,  
DEPUTY MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND INTERNATIONAL  
CO-OPERATION OF ITALY, AT THE TWENTY-SIXTH MEETING  
OF THE OSCE MINISTERIAL COUNCIL**

Bratislava, 5 and 6 December 2019

Mr. Chairperson-in-Office,  
President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly,  
Secretary General,  
Dear colleagues,

I should like first of all to congratulate the Chairperson-in-Office, Minister Miroslav Lajčák, on his outstanding work during the course of this year.

I thank the future Albanian Chairmanship for its collaboration in the Troika and wish the authorities in Tirana every success for 2020. I should also like to thank the colleagues in the Asian Contact Group partner countries for their support for our Chairmanship of this Group.

In the course of the discussion, I appreciated the reference to the principles and values of the OSCE, which bears witness to the aspiration of all participating States to give new impetus, strength and topicality to the “spirit of Helsinki”.

In that context, we support the Appeal by Mr. Lajčák regarding the need to promote joint efforts to increase commitment in that direction.

We must take inspiration from the words of Mr. Lajčák in favour of effective multilateralism. Our principles must be respected, not abused. For example, the consensus rule, which guides our work in the OSCE, should be a strength and not a weakness. If used sensibly and not tactically, consensus can strengthen the decisions taken in our Organization and make them truly effective.

Italy regards unceasing commitment by all participating States to inclusive dialogue and full sharing of responsibilities to be fundamental.

We believe that we should give priority to opportunities for convergence and should also work to intensify collaboration with our Asian and Mediterranean Partners. We have proposed specific measures with that in mind that we hope will be supported by all participating States.

Italy has supported and is committed to continuing to support the search by the OSCE for a stable and lasting solution to the Ukrainian crisis.

While remaining very concerned about the situation on the ground, we cannot fail to welcome the latest developments. The hope remains strong that political dialogue – both in the “Normandy format” and in the Trilateral Contact Group – will finally make it possible to build a sustainable negotiating path out of the crisis, with the full implementation of the Minsk agreements and with respect for Ukrainian sovereignty and territorial integrity.

We believe that the OSCE remains a key player in promoting negotiated solutions and political openings, also with regard to negotiated settlements of the conflicts in Nagorno-Karabakh and Georgia and the Transdniestrian issue.

Alongside traditional conflicts, we must continue to pay the utmost attention to the many “non-traditional” security challenges, strengthening all three dimensions on which the OSCE concept of “comprehensive security” is based.

We must promote joint responses based on a holistic approach to the challenges posed by transnational threats such as terrorism, cyberattacks, corruption, organized crime and trafficking in human beings and cultural goods.

The impact of digital and energy transformation and climate change on collective security is clear. We therefore need to step up our commitment to the economic and environmental dimension.

The human dimension is a fundamental pillar of the European security architecture. The rule of law, democracy and respect for the fundamental rights of the individual are of paramount importance here.

In that context, we shall continue, as we did this year as chair of the relevant Informal Working Group, to advocate broader and more structured participation by civil society in OSCE events.

We share the strong concern at the gradual erosion of the European security architecture. There is an urgent need to reverse this trend through the full implementation and maximum strengthening of the existing instruments, including the modernization of the Vienna Document. With reference to the latter, we encourage all participating States to embark on serious discussion on the basis of existing proposals.

I should also like to stress the value of the Structured Dialogue on current challenges as a means of creating the conditions for a relaunch of negotiations on conventional arms control.

Our objective, I repeat, is to return to responsible co-operative security management as a contribution to peace and stability, while respecting the fundamental principles underlying the OSCE.

I firmly believe that today’s meeting could offer a further opportunity for renewed commitment by all of us. I should like to conclude by congratulating Sweden and Poland on the approval of their candidacies for the OSCE Chairmanship in 2021 and 2022.

Thank you.