

Mr. Chairman,
Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen

ENGLISH only

I would like to start by commending the Italian Chairmanship for steering OSCE during this challenging year, and to thank you for your kind hospitality here in Milan.

Mr. Chairman,

Portugal remains deeply committed to the OSCE, as it offers a collective, cooperative and comprehensive approach to address our common security challenges. Restoring full respect for the collectively agreed OSCE commitments is essential to effectively guarantee European security.

The motto of the Italian Chairmanship - "Dialogue, Ownership and Responsibility" - is in this respect most appropriate.

One of your Chairmanship's priorities was to approach the challenges and opportunities in the Mediterranean region, namely the long-standing and multifaceted nature of the large movements of migrants and refugees.

This is a priority that Portugal fully subscribes to, as it is a global issue for which there are no unilateral

answers, and where only the multilateral approach offers solutions.

This is why the Global Pact on Migration, that we will be adopting in Marrakech next week, is of utmost importance in creating the right conditions to address these large scale movements. Even if the United Nations has the leading role, the OSCE can do more on a basis of complementarity, whenever it brings added-value.

The OSCE is a unique platform for dialogue and exchange of best practices among participating States and Partners for Cooperation, whether they are countries of origin, transit or destination.

While promoting the respect for human rights and combating all forms of human trafficking and smuggling, OSCE can also enhance cooperation to address the root causes of migration.

Furthermore, the OSCE can contribute to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, as promoting sustainable development and combating climate change has an overarching positive impact in terms of population settlement.

Portugal is both a country of origin and destination for migrants, and we are thus deeply aware of the need for proper integration into host societies, to prevent problems arising from failed inclusion.

Overall, we see large scale movements of people as an opportunity to reinvigorate our societies and promote shared prosperity, not only economically and demographically, but also culturally, as the intertwining of different experiences widens and enriches our world view.

In this context, guaranteeing the right to education in emergency situations, including higher education, is paramount for us. The Global Platform for Syrian Students, an initiative of the former Portuguese President Jorge Sampaio, is an excellent example in this field.

Portugal also salutes the Parliamentary Assembly of the OSCE for the work of its ad hoc committee on the theme of migration.

Mr. Chairman,

Current security challenges in Europe continue to require robust and effective Arms Control regimes and Confidence Security Building Measures. These regimes are complementary and remain integral to the OSCE's comprehensive and co-operative concept of security.

The existing instruments need to be fully implemented, but also revised and modernised, in order to rebuild the confidence currently lacking in

the OSCE area and, therefore, to guarantee our common security.

Portugal stands ready to take part in the efforts to revitalize these instruments, particularly the Vienna Document.

We are all aware of the different views regarding the security challenges we face, and that is why we support the continuation of the “Structured Dialogue” on the current and future challenges and risks to security in the OSCE area, in accordance to the mandate in the declaration “From Lisbon to Hamburg”. We consider it a valuable framework for a meaningful exchange of views and ideas and a suitable pathway towards the restoration of trust.

Mr. Chairman,

The crisis in and around Ukraine remains one of great concern. Portugal reiterates the EU’s call on Russia to reverse the illegal annexation of Crimea and Sevastopol. We will continue to support efforts, including in the framework of the Normandy format and Trilateral Contact Group, to help find a sustainable political solution to this crisis, respecting Ukraine’s sovereignty, unity, independence and territorial integrity. We support the implementation of the Minsk agreements in their entirety and the efforts of the Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine.

Portugal also remains concerned about the protracted conflicts in Georgia and Moldova, and about the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, and welcomes the recent progress in the framework of the 5+2 process on the Transnistrian settlement.

Mr. Chairman,

Portugal considers it essential to adopt decisions on all three of OSCE's dimensions and urges all Participating States to have a constructive attitude in this regard. The Organization needs a strong positive signal of its continued relevance. We cannot let it fall into a spiral of mistrust and abandon our commitment towards multilateralism.

I conclude by expressing Portugal's best wishes of success to the incoming Slovak Chairmanship and by conveying it our full support.

Thank you.