

Mr. Chairman,
Excellences, Ladies and Gentlemen

MC.DEL/35/17
8 December 2017

ENGLISH only

I would like to start by praising the Austrian Chairmanship for steering the OSCE during this challenging year and to thank you for the hospitality in Vienna.

Portugal subscribes to the statement delivered by the EU.

Mr. Chairman,

The priorities of the Austrian Chairmanship, namely defusing existing conflicts, fighting radicalization and violent extremism mainly of youth and re-establishing trust and confidence among participating States clearly respond to the threats and challenges we face in the OSCE region.

Portugal remains firmly committed to the Helsinki Final Act and the Paris Charter, reaffirmed in the 2010 OSCE Astana Declaration. The OSCE, with its comprehensive and cooperative approach to security, its membership from Vancouver to Vladivostok, its Autonomous Institutions and field missions, remains a key Organization for guaranteeing our collective security.

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

Portugal stands ready to support efforts to revitalize these instruments, including the modernization of the Vienna Document. Progress is possible through inclusive dialogue among all participating States.

The Declaration "From Lisbon to Hamburg", adopted last year under the Portuguese Chairmanship of the FSC, set the basis for the Structured Dialogue to reinvigorate co-operative security in the politico-military area. Important work has been carried out in 2017 and we stand ready to support the efforts of the upcoming Italian Chairmanship.

Mr. Chairman,

The crisis in and around Ukraine remains of the utmost concern.

We firmly back all political and diplomatic efforts towards the peaceful solution of the crisis and praise the OSCE in this regard. The Special Monitoring Mission in Ukraine has a unique role. We urge all sides to respect the mission's staff and mandate, allowing its safe, secure and unimpeded access throughout Ukraine.

The full implementation of the Minsk agreements remains key. Moreover, further efforts are necessary to address the suffering of civilians and the grave humanitarian impact of the crisis.

We strongly support the Organization's efforts aimed at reaching sustainable political solutions to the so-called protracted conflicts in Georgia, in the Republic of Moldova and the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

Terrorism, violent extremism and radicalization that lead to terrorism are among the main challenges to our collective security. The OSCE, in cooperation with other regional and international organizations, has an important role to play in this domain. Countering terrorism requires a sustained and comprehensive approach that fully respects human rights. Special emphasis should be put on preventive measures and on working with youth.

Mr. Chairman,

The large movements of migrants and refugees require a global response grounded on the respect for international obligations, namely with regard to human rights, and on the principles of solidarity and shared responsibility.

During the OSCE Mediterranean Conference in Palermo, last October, we had in-depth discussions on the challenges, but also on the opportunities, stemming from migrations. We confirmed that the OSCE can contribute to the ongoing global efforts to address this issue. Portugal highly values the work carried by the OSCE on migrations across the three dimensions. We welcome the enhanced attention the upcoming Italian Chairmanship intends to devote to it.

Most of the challenges we face are shared by our Mediterranean Partners for Cooperation, as well as our Asian Partners. Portugal supports their increased involvement in the work of the OSCE.

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

Thank you.