

Chairmanship: Albania

**SPECIAL MEETING OF THE PERMANENT COUNCIL
(1280th Plenary Meeting)**

1. Date: Friday, 11 September 2020

Opened: 2.05 p.m.

Closed: 2.30 p.m.

2. Chairperson: Ambassador I. Hasani

3. Subjects discussed – Statements – Decisions/documents adopted:

Agenda item 1: DECISION ON THE 2020 HUMAN DIMENSION
IMPLEMENTATION MEETING

Chairperson

Decision: The Permanent Council adopted Decision No. 1376 (PC.DEC/1376) on the 2020 Human Dimension Implementation Meeting, the text of which is appended to this journal.

Germany-European Union (interpretative statement, see attachment 1 to the decision), Switzerland (interpretative statement, see attachment 2 to the decision), Russian Federation (interpretative statement, see attachment 3 to the decision), United States of America (interpretative statement, see attachment 4 to the decision), Sweden (also on behalf of Poland) (interpretative statement, see attachment 5 to the decision), United Kingdom (interpretative statement, see attachment 6 to the decision), Canada (interpretative statement, see attachment 7 to the decision), Turkey (interpretative statement, see attachment 8 to the decision), Armenia (interpretative statement, see attachment 9 to the decision)

Agenda item 2: REVIEW OF CURRENT ISSUES

None

Agenda item 3: ANY OTHER BUSINESS

None

4. Next meeting:

Thursday, 17 September 2020, at 10 a.m., in the Neuer Saal and via video
teleconference



**Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
Permanent Council**

PC.DEC/1376
11 September 2020

Original: ENGLISH

1280th Plenary Meeting

PC Journal No. 1280, Agenda item 1

**DECISION No. 1376
2020 HUMAN DIMENSION IMPLEMENTATION MEETING**

The Permanent Council,

Recalling its Decision No. 476 (PC.DEC/476) of 23 May 2002 on the modalities for OSCE meetings on human dimension issues,

Recognizing that the COVID-19 pandemic constitutes a challenge to all OSCE participating States,

Decides that:

1. The Human Dimension Implementation Meeting will, exceptionally, not take place in 2020;
2. This decision is due to the unprecedented, extraordinary and unpredictable circumstances caused by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and, therefore, does not establish any precedent for the organization of future Human Dimension Implementation Meetings;
3. This decision is without prejudice to the provisions of relevant OSCE documents and decisions, including the 1992 Helsinki Document and Permanent Council Decision No. 476.

**INTERPRETATIVE STATEMENT UNDER
PARAGRAPH IV.1(A)6 OF THE RULES OF PROCEDURE
OF THE ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY AND
CO-OPERATION IN EUROPE**

The delegation of Germany, in its capacity as EU Presidency, passed the floor to the representative of the European Union, who delivered the following statement:

“In connection with the Permanent Council decision adopted on 11 September 2020, and in accordance with paragraph IV.1(A)6 of the Rules of Procedure of the OSCE, the European Union makes the following interpretative statement:

The European Union wishes to thank the Albanian Chairmanship for all the efforts invested in advancing the process related to the mandated human dimension events during this period marked by unprecedented challenges related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

We appreciate the work of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), as well as Poland as the host country of the ODIHR, when it comes to the organization of the human dimension events as an opportunity for all of us to engage meaningfully with civil society. In these extraordinary times we remain committed to engaging constructively in the discussions on how we can best adapt our work to the current situation.

We would like to underline that the decision to not hold the Human Dimension Implementation Meeting this year would solely be the result of the measures taken in connection with the current COVID-19 pandemic and should in no way be considered as a precedent for the future.

Mr. Chairperson, we would kindly ask you to attach this statement to the decision just adopted and the journal of the day.”

The candidate countries the Republic of North Macedonia¹, Montenegro^{Error! Bookmark not defined.} and Albania^{Error! Bookmark not defined.}, the country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the EFTA country Liechtenstein, member of the European Economic Area, as well as the Republic of Moldova, align themselves with this statement.

1 The Republic of North Macedonia, Montenegro and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.

**INTERPRETATIVE STATEMENT UNDER
PARAGRAPH IV.1(A)6 OF THE RULES OF PROCEDURE
OF THE ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY AND
CO-OPERATION IN EUROPE**

By the delegation of Switzerland:

“Mr. Chairperson,

My delegation thanks the Albanian OSCE Chairmanship for all the efforts and its leadership during these exceptional times.

Switzerland is convinced of the unique value of the Human Dimension Implementation Meeting (HDIM). We regret that the HDIM cannot take place this year. Switzerland would like to emphasize that the 2020 HDIM will not take place due to one reason only: the unprecedented, extraordinary and unpredictable circumstances caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. In this regard, Switzerland would like to go on the record to stress that the decision is solely due to exceptional circumstances and does not establish any precedent for the future.

Based on this understanding, Switzerland agreed to join the consensus on today’s decision. There can be no doubt of the necessity to preserve the HDIM as one of the most important meetings in the OSCE calendar. We are looking forward to participating in the HDIM in September 2021.

Assessing the state of implementation of our common human dimension commitments from governmental and civil society perspectives alike is crucial. In light of the exceptional decision that the HDIM will not take place this year, Switzerland believes that it would be useful to organize a series of meetings on the state of affairs regarding human rights, the rule of law, and democratization in the OSCE area. These meetings should be organized in co-operation with ODIHR, and should take place with the participation of civil society organizations.

We request that this statement be attached to the decision included in the journal of the day.

Thank you.”

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11 September 2020
Attachment 3

ENGLISH
Original: RUSSIAN

**INTERPRETATIVE STATEMENT UNDER
PARAGRAPH IV.1(A)6 OF THE RULES OF PROCEDURE
OF THE ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY AND
CO-OPERATION IN EUROPE**

By the delegation of the Russian Federation:

“Having joined the consensus regarding the Permanent Council decision on cancelling the 2020 OSCE Human Dimension Implementation Meeting, the Russian Federation emphasizes that this decision does not constitute a precedent in terms of the procedure for adopting decisions on holding future Human Dimension Implementation Meetings. The relevant procedure is laid down in paragraph VI(A)2 of the Rules of the Procedure of the OSCE, which stipulates that ‘the participating States shall adopt decisions regarding the time, venue, theme(s), agenda, timetable and organizational modalities for each OSCE meeting or for a series of OSCE meetings’.

The Russian Federation’s assumption continues to be that the themes and organizational modalities of key OSCE events on human dimension issues – including the Human Dimension Implementation Meeting, the Human Dimension Seminar and the three Supplementary Human Dimension Meetings – should be seen as making up a single ‘package’. When agreeing on the programme of events on human dimension issues for a year, it is essential to provide for a balanced discussion of all categories of human rights, including civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights.

In accordance with Chapter IV, paragraph (16), of the CSCE Helsinki Document (1992), the provisions for creating opportunities for the increased involvement of non-governmental organizations in CSCE activities ‘will not be applied to persons or organizations which resort to the use of violence or publicly condone terrorism or the use of violence’. At the same time, civil society representatives, including NGOs with experience in ensuring and protecting human rights, should have unhindered access to Human Dimension Implementation Meetings.

The Russian Federation has on a number of occasions pointed out the need for comprehensive streamlining of the entire OSCE human dimension. The current crisis situation has confirmed the extreme urgency of such a reform.

We request that this statement be attached to the adopted decision and included in the journal of the day.”

**INTERPRETATIVE STATEMENT UNDER
PARAGRAPH IV.1(A)6 OF THE RULES OF PROCEDURE
OF THE ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY AND
CO-OPERATION IN EUROPE**

By the delegation of the United States of America:

“Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

The United States appreciates the determined effort of the Chairmanship to facilitate discussions regarding the 2020 Human Dimension Implementation Meeting (HDIM), as well as its flexibility and creative thinking in attempting to arrive at a solution on how the OSCE could hold this mandated event despite the uniquely challenging circumstances we face. Due to the extraordinary circumstances of the pandemic, we accept with great regret that this important event will not take place this year.

The United States would like to echo and emphasize the Chairperson’s statement that the HDIM will not take place “due solely to the unprecedented, exceptional and unpredictable circumstances caused by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic” and that this cannot and does not “establish any precedent for the organization of future Human Dimension Implementation Meetings”.

As we have underscored on numerous occasions, the United States believes respect for the human rights and fundamental freedoms enshrined in international instruments and our OSCE commitments is essential to lasting security in our area. The United States remains deeply committed to defending and advancing the OSCE’s human dimension. We resolve to work with fellow participating States, the Chairmanship, OSCE institutions, and in partnership with civil society to ensure international attention remains focused on human dimension concerns. Our vigilance will be especially important given the challenging pandemic conditions.

In the absence of a 2020 HDIM, the United States supports creating and/or seizing other opportunities within the OSCE to spotlight human dimension issues, including by holding other meetings, to the maximum extent possible with provision for virtual civil society participation. However, we underscore that any such activities, with or without NGO participation, are not substitutes for the HDIM. We also intend to make maximum use of Permanent Council meetings and other scheduled events to emphasize our undiminished commitment to the human dimension of security and to call out actions by those who would seek to undermine it. We welcome an open, but above all an honest, dialogue on human dimension issues, and we expect others to engage accordingly.

I request that this interpretative statement be attached to the decision and to the journal of the day.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.”

**INTERPRETATIVE STATEMENT UNDER
PARAGRAPH IV.1(A)6 OF THE RULES OF PROCEDURE
OF THE ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY AND
CO-OPERATION IN EUROPE**

By the delegation of Sweden (also on behalf of Poland):

“Thank you, Mr. Chairperson,

Under paragraph IV.1(A)6 of the OSCE Rules and Procedure the delegations of Sweden and Poland would like to make the following joint interpretative statement.

As the two consecutive incoming Chairmanships we thank the Chairperson-in-Office for their extraordinary efforts in overcoming the difficulties created by the COVID-19 pandemic. We fully support the efforts of the Chairperson-in-Office and joined the consensus on the decision taken in this unprecedented, unpredictable and exceptional situation.

We also strongly emphasize that this year’s decision, taken due to the unprecedented situation caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, by no means sets a precedent for the years to come. We will start engaging at the earliest possible time with the participating States, the Office for Democratic Institutions Human Rights (ODIHR) and other stakeholders to ensure for the upcoming years that all necessary support is provided to the ODIHR in order to fulfil its mandated role as the organizer of the annual Human Dimension Implementation Meeting at its seat, as all participating States have committed to.

I kindly ask the Chairperson to attach this statement to the decision and to the journal of the day.

Thank you.”

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11 September 2020
Attachment 6

Original: ENGLISH

**INTERPRETATIVE STATEMENT UNDER
PARAGRAPH IV.1(A)6 OF THE RULES OF PROCEDURE
OF THE ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY AND
CO-OPERATION IN EUROPE**

By the delegation of the United Kingdom:

“In connection with the decision of the Permanent Council on the decision on the 2020 Human Dimension Implementation Meeting, the United Kingdom would also like to make the following interpretative statement under paragraph IV.1(A)6 of the OSCE Rules of Procedure.

The United Kingdom would like to join others in underlining the unprecedented and exceptional circumstances caused by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. And that this decision is due solely to these exceptional circumstances, and does not set a precedent for the organization of future Human Dimension Implementation Meetings.

I request that this statement be attached to the decision and to the journal of the day.”

**INTERPRETATIVE STATEMENT UNDER
PARAGRAPH IV.1(A)6 OF THE RULES OF PROCEDURE
OF THE ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY AND
CO-OPERATION IN EUROPE**

By the delegation of Canada:

“Mr. Chairperson,

In connection with the decision of the Permanent Council on the 2020 Human Dimension Implementation Meeting (HDIM), Canada would like to make the following interpretative statement under paragraph IV.1(A)6 of the OSCE Rules of Procedure:

Canada agrees with the determination made in this decision; that the 2020 HDIM will, exceptionally, not take place in 2020 due solely to the unprecedented, extraordinary, and unpredictable circumstances caused by the ongoing COVID-19 global pandemic.

Canada is a strong supporter of the OSCE human dimension and of the HDIM, and we do not take lightly or easily a decision to not hold the HDIM. We have assessed, however, that a meaningful and safe HDIM could not have been conducted under these extraordinary circumstances.

We agree that Permanent Council Decision No. 476 (PC.DEC/476) is very clear that the HDIM must take place in years without a Review Conference, and our assessment is that it is only due to the *force majeure* of the COVID-19 pandemic that we are not able to proceed this year.

Canada very much appreciates the efforts that the Chairmanship-in-Office has undertaken to explore possible ways of holding the HDIM in the circumstances in which we find ourselves. We found the consultations held by the Chairmanship on this issue to be very informative in our consideration of all the factors at play, and we appreciate the leadership that the Chairmanship has demonstrated.

We understand that the Chairmanship will be proposing alternative human dimension events in the absence of the HDIM this year, and we look forward to working with the 2021 Swedish Chairmanship to resume an in-person HDIM in 2021.

Canada requests that this statement be attached to the decision and reflected in the journal of the day.

Thank you.”

**INTERPRETATIVE STATEMENT UNDER
PARAGRAPH IV.1(A)6 OF THE RULES OF PROCEDURE
OF THE ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY AND
CO-OPERATION IN EUROPE**

By the delegation of Turkey:

“In connection with the Permanent Council decision just adopted on the 2020 Human Dimension Implementation Meeting (HDIM), the Republic of Turkey wishes to make the following interpretative statement under paragraph IV.1(A)6 of the OSCE Rules of Procedure:

Permanent Council Decision No. 476 of 23 May 2002 on the modalities for OSCE meetings on human dimension issues specifies the Permanent Council decisions required to organize the HDIM. Thus, the HDIM cannot be organized in the absence of the necessary Permanent Council decisions on the date, topics and agenda of the HDIM. Decision No. 476 does not foresee or require the adoption of a Permanent Council decision in case the HDIM does not take place.

The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic caused unprecedented, extraordinary and unpredictable circumstances. The pandemic constitutes a major challenge to all OSCE participating States.

In this year’s consultations conducted by the Chairmanship, it became evident that consensus could not be reached regarding the necessary decisions to organize the 2020 HDIM.

Given this fact, a statement by the Chairmanship, e.g., in the Permanent Council, informing the participating States that the HDIM cannot take place would have been the proper way to proceed.

Turkey joined consensus on this decision solely with the understanding that this Permanent Council decision is without prejudice to the relevant provisions of OSCE documents and decisions which *inter alia* specify the required consensus decisions to organize OSCE events and conferences, including the HDIM.

In this context, Turkey recalls its interpretative statement made on 26 July 2019 following the adoption of Permanent Council Decision No. 1341 on the dates of the 2019 Human Dimension Implementation Meeting.

Mr. Chairperson, we request this statement be attached to the decision as well as to the journal of the day.”

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11 September 2020
Attachment 9

Original: ENGLISH

**INTERPRETATIVE STATEMENT UNDER
PARAGRAPH IV.1(A)6 OF THE RULES OF PROCEDURE
OF THE ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY AND
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By the delegation of Armenia:

“Mr. Chairperson,

In connection with the Permanent Council decision on the 2020 Human Dimension Implementation Meeting as adopted on 11 September and under paragraph IV.1(A)6 of the Rules of Procedure of the OSCE the delegation of Armenia would like to make the following statement:

The delegation of Armenia regrets that it has not been possible to hold the Human Dimension Implementation Meeting this year.

The delegation of Armenia states that the adoption of this decision is solely due to the unprecedented circumstances entailed by the COVID-19 pandemic and therefore cannot and will not create any precedent with regard to our future meetings in the human dimension.

I kindly ask that this statement be attached to the decision and journal of the day.

Thank you.”