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**STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR MARIA-PIA KOTHBAUER,  
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF LIECHTENSTEIN TO THE  
OSCE, AT THE 1170th MEETING OF THE  
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

21 December 2017

**In response to the inaugural address by the  
Chairperson-in-Office, H.E. Karin Kneissl, Federal Minister for Europe,  
Integration and Foreign Affairs of Austria**

Excellencies,

As the doyenne of the OSCE corps, it is an honour and pleasure for me to welcome you today, also on behalf of my colleagues, to our last regular meeting of the Permanent Council under the Austrian Chairmanship.

We highly appreciate your presence today in the Permanent Council a few days after your appointment as Austrian Minister for Foreign Affairs and hence also OSCE Chairperson-in-Office.

In this way, you highlight the significance you attach to multilateral diplomacy and confirm the role that you attribute to the OSCE as a regional organization and platform for dialogue in its three dimensions. Both are essential for our work.

Over the past year we have been obliged to note that the norms and principle of the OSCE have been breached and that instability, armed conflicts, human rights violations and terrorism continue to exist in the OSCE area.

In these circumstances, multilateral diplomacy is indispensable. The OSCE in particular and its instruments have demonstrated their added value in times of crisis. The OSCE Secretary General and the heads of the autonomous institutions have been powerful representatives of our Organization. It was important for these four positions to be filled again during the Austrian Chairmanship.

Austrian diplomacy is about dialogue and bridge-building. The Austrian OSCE Chairmanship has very skilfully put both of these at the disposal of our Organization this past year.

We congratulate Austria on this successful Chairmanship year and on the excellently organized Ministerial Council meeting. Our ministers highly appreciated the fact that the OSCE Ministerial Council meeting was held in the magnificent surroundings of the Hofburg in Vienna.

In conclusion, I should like to thank our colleagues, Ambassadors Koja, Raunig and Strohal, and their entire team for their outstanding work and intensive commitment to the OSCE, its goals and values. We are highly impressed by their professional, but also above all by their human, qualities.

Finally, we should like to wish you, dear Federal Minister, Merry Christmas and much success in your responsible work in 2018.