

The OSCE Secretariat bears no responsibility for the content of this document and circulates it without altering its content. The distribution by OSCE Conference Services of this document is without prejudice to OSCE decisions, as set out in documents agreed by OSCE participating States.

MC.DEL/2/20
3 December 2020

ENGLISH
Original: GERMAN

Delegation of Liechtenstein

**STATEMENT BY MS. KATRIN EGGENBERGER,
MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS, JUSTICE AND CULTURE OF THE
PRINCIPALITY OF LIECHTENSTEIN, AT THE TWENTY-SEVENTH MEETING
OF THE OSCE MINISTERIAL COUNCIL**

Tirana, 3 December 2020

Mr. Chairperson,
Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen,

It would have been my great pleasure to have come to Tirana for today's Ministerial Council meeting to thank you, Prime Minister Rama, and your team on the spot for the outstanding leadership of the OSCE in this challenging year. Owing to the COVID-19 safety measures, this is, to my regret, possible only by virtual means.

The Albanian Chairmanship has steered the OSCE through the turbulent times of 2020 with great commitment and competence. This period has been characterized by the pandemic and the conflicts and crises in the OSCE area. Work has been further complicated by the inability of the OSCE participating States this summer to agree in good time on the extension of the leadership of the OSCE institutions. The year 2020 was definitely not a year in which the Chairmanship was able to act in accordance with established precedents.

Despite this, Mr. Chairperson, you have succeeded in rising to these very different challenges, in involving the OSCE participating States in the search for solutions and in inspiring confidence in new approaches. We thank and congratulate you on this.

In particular, we should like to congratulate you for having succeeded in reaching an agreement on the appointment of the four leadership positions of the Organization.

Mr. Chairperson,

Almost every aspect of our lives has been affected by COVID-19 this year. This is also true of the work of the OSCE. In an effort to contain the pandemic and protect the health of their populations as best they can, governments have encroached on the fundamental rights and freedoms of their citizens. The pandemic has exacerbated existing security challenges in Europe and has led to a further deterioration in the humanitarian situation, particularly in conflict areas. The situation with regard to trafficking in human beings has also deteriorated. Liechtenstein is strongly committed to the fight against modern slavery and

trafficking in human beings through the Finance Against Slavery and Trafficking initiative. I welcome the fact that we have been able to further enhance co-operation within the OSCE framework in this area.

This year, crisis and opportunity went hand in hand. This applies both to the commitment to effective multilateralism and to the OSCE as a European platform for dialogue on security issues. Science has shown us the way. Without close and international co-operation, it would not have been possible to develop a vaccine against COVID-19 in a short time. We should follow this example and use the experience of 2020 to strengthen both multilateralism and the OSCE.

We can draw the self-confidence to do this from the two anniversaries we are celebrating this year in the OSCE. The Helsinki Final Act and the Charter of Paris are milestones on the road to peace and freedom in our common OSCE area. A renewed assurance by all of us of the full implementation of OSCE principles and commitments would make a significant contribution to restoring and enhancing security and confidence in the OSCE.

This applies in particular to the conflicts and crises in the OSCE area. It was with great concern that we witnessed the escalation of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict this autumn. We welcome the agreed ceasefire and support the role of the OSCE in the efforts to find a lasting solution.

The security situation in eastern Ukraine remains very serious. The fact that the ceasefire has been broadly respected in recent months is to be welcomed. The OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine is making a decisive contribution and deserves our full support.

We must focus our undivided attention on the serious humanitarian consequences of these conflicts and the situation of the civilian population. The work of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has a prominent role to play in this respect. The ICRC is Liechtenstein's largest partner in humanitarian aid.

The political situation and the violation of human rights and fundamental freedoms in Belarus give cause for concern. These are matters for us to keep a close eye on. Liechtenstein supports the mediating role of the OSCE. In our view, the OSCE is well placed to contribute to national reconciliation and to find ways of overcoming the current crisis.

Mr. Chairperson,

Allow me to conclude by wishing Sweden all the best for the Chairmanship next year.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.