

**TWENTY-EIGHTH MEETING OF THE OSCE MINISTERIAL COUNCIL  
(Stockholm, 3 December 2021)**

**STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF ROMANIA**

**(ALSO ON BEHALF OF ALBANIA, BELGIUM, BULGARIA, CANADA, CROATIA, THE CZECH REPUBLIC, DENMARK, ESTONIA, FRANCE, GERMANY, GREECE, HUNGARY, ICELAND, ITALY, LATVIA, LITHUANIA, LUXEMBOURG, MONTENEGRO, THE NETHERLANDS, NORTH MACEDONIA, NORWAY, POLAND, PORTUGAL, SLOVAKIA, SLOVENIA, SPAIN, TURKEY, THE UNITED KINGDOM, THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA)**

Madam Chairperson,

This statement is delivered on behalf of the following participating States: Albania, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Montenegro, the Netherlands, North Macedonia, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Turkey, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America as well as my own country, Romania.

The global COVID-19 pandemic continues to test the resilience of our nations and our OSCE community. The unprecedented challenges of the pandemic have added a new layer of complexity to the security environment and challenges we face and to a context in which international law and Helsinki Final Act principles are being blatantly disregarded. Verification activities suspended due to the COVID-19 pandemic should be resumed as soon as the health situation allows and with a view to reciprocity.

Climate change is one of the defining challenges of our times. It is a threat multiplier that impacts our security both in the OSCE region and globally. We encourage meaningful engagement in the OSCE on this issue, including to increase our awareness, adaptation and mitigation efforts. Climate change puts our resilience and civil preparedness to the test, affects our planning and the resilience of our military installations and critical infrastructure.

Security challenges have not diminished. Key principles and commitments continue to be contravened. We stand firm in our commitment to the fight against terrorism in all its forms and manifestations and are taking stronger action together to prevent and counter it. Instability beyond our borders is also contributing to irregular migration and human trafficking. Both state and non-state actors use hybrid activities to target our political institutions, our public opinion, and the security of our citizens. Cyber threats are complex, destructive, coercive, and becoming ever more frequent. This has been recently illustrated by ransomware incidents and other malicious cyber activity.

In order to tackle these challenges and rebuild trust the OSCE participating States need to engage in sincere dialogue and multilateral cooperation, based on respect for fundamental principles that lie at the heart of this Organization.

We continue to respond to the deteriorating security environment by enhancing our deterrence and defense posture. We remain open to a meaningful dialogue with Russia, including in OSCE platforms, on the basis of reciprocity, with a view to avoiding misunderstanding, miscalculation, and unintended escalation, and increasing transparency and predictability. We also remain open to a constructive relationship with Russia when its actions make that possible.

However, the reality is that Russia's growing multi-domain military build-up, more assertive posture, novel military capabilities, and provocative activities, including near our borders, as well as its large-scale no-notice exercises, the continued military build-up in Crimea and on Ukraine's borders, the deployment of modern dual-capable missiles in Kaliningrad, military integration with Belarus, and repeated violations of our airspace, increasingly threaten the security of the OSCE area and the rules-based international order and contribute to instability along our borders and beyond. In addition to its military activities, Russia has also intensified its hybrid actions against our allies and partners, including through its intelligence services and proxies. This includes attempted interference in elections and democratic processes; political, economic and energy-related pressure and intimidation; widespread disinformation campaigns; malicious cyber activities and turning a blind eye to cyber criminals operating from its territory, including those who target and disrupt critical infrastructure in our countries. We stand in full solidarity with the Czech Republic and other participating States that have been affected in this way.

Here at OSCE, we deeply regret Russia's refusal to support holding the 2021 Human Dimension Implementation Meeting (HDIM). Moscow's obstructionism is detrimental to the efficient pursuits of human dimension objectives which are at the core of the OSCE comprehensive concept of security.

We reiterate our unwavering support for the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders, extending to its territorial waters. In accordance with its international commitments, we call on Russia to withdraw the forces it has stationed in the country without its consent. We strongly condemn and will not recognize Russia's illegal and illegitimate annexation of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol and denounce its temporary occupation. The human rights abuses and violations against the Crimean Tatars and members of other local communities must end. Russia's military build-up and destabilising activities in and around Ukraine have further escalated tensions and undermined security. We condemn its ongoing aggression in eastern Ukraine. We also condemn Russia's ongoing militarization of the Crimean peninsula, which continues to impact the security situation near the Kerch Strait, Sea of Azov and the Black Sea region. We call on Russia to reverse its military build-up and stop restricting navigation in parts of the Black Sea. We also call on Russia to stop impeding access to the Sea of Azov and Ukrainian ports. We deeply regret Russia's refusal to extend the mandate of the OSCE Observer Mission at the Russian Checkpoints Gukovo and Donetsk and in accordance with Article 4/ of the Minsk Protocol we underline the importance of the effective monitoring of the Ukrainian border areas temporarily not under the control of the government of Ukraine. We call on Russia to remove any obstacles in this regard allowing for greater transparency and to provide safe and secure access for Special Monitoring Mission (SMM) operations throughout Ukraine, consistent with the SMM's mandate, including new forward patrol bases as suggested by the SMM. We commend Ukraine's posture of restraint and diplomatic approach aimed at peacefully resolving the Russia-Ukraine conflict. We seek to contribute to de-escalation.

We call for the full implementation of the Minsk agreements by all sides, and support the efforts of the Normandy format and the Trilateral Contact Group. Russia, as a signatory of the Minsk agreements – and a party, not a mediator to the conflict - bears significant responsibility in this regard. We call on Russia to stop fueling the conflict by providing financial and military support to the armed formations it backs in eastern Ukraine. We reiterate our full support to the OSCE SMM to Ukraine. We stress the importance of ensuring its safety and full and unhindered access for its monitors throughout the entire territory of Ukraine, including Crimea and the Russia-Ukraine border, in accordance with its mandate. To this end we call on Russia to use its undeniable influence over the armed formations it backs to stop obstructing SMM patrols, targeting UAV flights and tampering with SMM cameras as well as cease restricting its movements within the Non-Government Controlled Area.

We reiterate our support for the territorial integrity and sovereignty of the Republic of Moldova and Georgia within their internationally recognized borders. In accordance with international obligations and commitments, we call on Russia to withdraw the forces it has stationed in both countries without their consent.

We remain deeply concerned about increased repression in Belarus since August 2020. We strongly condemn continued wide-scale attacks and unprecedented pressure on independent media outlets, journalists, civil society organizations, human rights defenders, political opposition members and other everyday citizens who peacefully demand democracy. We call on the authorities to immediately and unconditionally release all political prisoners, including those belonging to the Union of Poles in Belarus. We urge the Belarusian authorities to enact the relevant recommendations within the OSCE. The policies and actions of Belarus have implications for regional stability. We strongly condemn the continued instrumentalization of irregular migration artificially created by Belarus as part of hybrid actions targeted against Poland, Lithuania, and Latvia for political purposes. We will remain vigilant against the risk of further escalation and provocation by Belarus at its borders with Poland, Lithuania, and Latvia, and will continue to monitor the implications for our security. We call on Belarus to cease these actions, to respect human rights and fundamental freedoms, and to abide by international law.

Arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation instruments have made and should continue to make an essential contribution to achieving our security objectives and to ensuring strategic stability and our collective security. We remain collectively determined to uphold and support existing disarmament, arms control, and non-proliferation agreements and commitments. We will seek to further strengthen arms control, disarmament, and non-proliferation measures, as a key element of security in the OSCE area, taking into account the prevailing security environment. We welcome new strategic talks between the United States and Russia on future arms control measures, taking into account our collective security.

As we mark the twenty-fifth anniversary of the OSCE's Lisbon Framework for Arms Control, we underline the importance of conventional arms control and Confidence and Security Building Measures (CSBM) for advancing comprehensive, co-operative and indivisible security in the OSCE area. The effectiveness of arms control instruments and CSBMs is primarily reliant on political will. We call on all OSCE participating States to fully adhere to their arms control commitments and obligations. We are determined to preserve, strengthen, and modernize conventional arms control in Europe, based on key principles and commitments, including respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, refraining from the threat or use of force, reciprocity, transparency, and host nation consent to the presence of foreign forces.

Russia's ongoing selective implementation of the Vienna Document, its long-standing failure to implement the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe and its decision to withdraw from the Treaty on Open Skies, combined with its aggressive military posture, continue to undermine security and stability in the OSCE area. We call on Russia to return to full implementation of and compliance with the letter and spirit of all of its international obligations and commitments, which is essential to rebuild trust and confidence, military transparency and increase predictability in the OSCE area.

Enhancing military transparency and confidence in the entire OSCE region is, and will remain, a top priority in the Forum for Security Cooperation. We call on Russia to abide by its Vienna Document commitments, fully and in good faith, and to be open and transparent about its no-notice snap exercises and large-scale exercises and troop movements. Russia's failure to provide substantive explanations regarding its unusual military build-up in and around Ukraine last spring and failure to address concerns regarding the exercise ZAPAD-21 yet again call into question its adherence to the Vienna Document. Our concerns about Russia's unusual military activities are ongoing. OSCE participating States should continue to address effective risk reduction and incident prevention and ways to increase

military transparency, including in the discussions within the Structured Dialogue and its Expert Level Workshops in accordance with the Hamburg mandate.

We consider full implementation and substantial modernization of the Vienna Document the most critical step OSCE participating States can take in that regard. We welcome the broad support for modernizing the Vienna Document and look forward to intensified discussions in the Forum for Security Cooperation leading to consensus on an updated Vienna Document. The Joint Proposal on Vienna Document modernization supported by the majority of participating States provides a sound basis for active and collaborative negotiations. We appeal to Russia to reconsider its position and constructively engage without precondition in negotiations on the mutually beneficial and long-overdue modernization of the Vienna Document. We call on Russia to demonstrate the necessary political will to re-build military transparency, de-escalate tensions and address widely shared concerns about the European security environment.

The Treaty on Open Skies is an important legally binding instrument and a recognized element of the confidence-building framework in the OSCE area, intended to provide a level of transparency that contributes to the promotion of confidence, stability and security between States Parties. In this regard, we deeply regret the notification by Russia of its decision to withdraw from the Treaty. We have repeatedly called on Russia to return to full compliance with the Treaty and have taken multiple steps to constructively resolve outstanding issues of compliance. The past months should have been used to reconsider the withdrawal decision and to return to full compliance.

At the same time we value the Structured Dialogue launched by the 2016 Hamburg Ministerial Declaration on the current and future challenges and risks to security in the OSCE area as an opportunity to renew a meaningful exchange of ideas among all of the stakeholders to rebuild trust. We commend the Spanish Chair of the Informal Working Group and his team for the significant and valuable work done this year and the previous one in the Structured Dialogue addressing risk reduction and threat perceptions. We actively support the continuation of the Structured Dialogue as a transparent, inclusive process owned and driven by participating States, and without a predetermined outcome. We acknowledge that this is a long-term process, which will take more time. We encourage all participating States to engage constructively in these efforts in Vienna.

We regret the fact that no consensus has been reached on the proposals for four Forum for Security Cooperation (FSC) deliverables for this Ministerial Council. We welcome the joint statements on Vienna Document modernization and on Small Arms and Light Weapons and Stockpiles of Conventional Ammunition.

Recognizing the critical importance of women's full, equal, and meaningful participation at all levels of decision-making and leadership in all aspects of peace and stability, as well as the disproportionate impact that conflict has on women and girls, including conflict-related sexual violence, we are committed to fully implementing the Women, Peace and Security Agenda (WPS). We underline the relevance of the UNSCR 1325 and related resolutions for the OSCE's work, including the Forum for Security Cooperation.

In conclusion, all OSCE participating States need, without further delay, to rebuild the cooperative security environment, by returning to constructive dialogue based on respect in practice for the principles that fully uphold the rules-based international order.

The participating States subscribing to this statement request its inclusion in the Journal of this ministerial meeting.