

Chairmanship: Sweden

**SPECIAL MEETING OF THE PERMANENT COUNCIL
(1298th Plenary Meeting)**

1. Date: Thursday, 14 January 2021 (via video teleconference)

Opened: 10.05 a.m.

Closed: 1.55 p.m.

2. Chairperson: Ambassador U. Funered

Prior to taking up the agenda, the Chairperson welcomed the new Permanent Representative of Italy to the OSCE, H.E. Ambassador Stefano Baldi.

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

Agenda item 1: ADDRESS BY THE CHAIRPERSON-IN-OFFICE OF THE OSCE, MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF SWEDEN, H.E. MS. ANN LINDE

Chairperson, Chairperson-in-Office (CIO.GAL/1/21/Corr.1 OSCE+), Albania (PC.DEL/5/21 OSCE+), Portugal-European Union (with the candidate countries Albania, Montenegro and North Macedonia; the European Free Trade Association countries Iceland and Liechtenstein, members of the European Economic Area; as well as Andorra, Moldova and San Marino, in alignment) (PC.DEL/26/21), Russian Federation (PC.DEL/3/21), Azerbaijan (PC.DEL/2/21 OSCE+), Turkey (PC.DEL/25/21 OSCE+), Holy See (PC.DEL/4/21/Corr.1 OSCE+), Armenia (Annex 1), Switzerland (PC.DEL/11/21 OSCE+), Ukraine (PC.DEL/8/21/Corr.1), Kazakhstan (PC.DEL/15/21/Rev.1 OSCE+), United Kingdom (PC.DEL/6/21 OSCE+), Norway (PC.DEL/13/21), Georgia, Belarus (PC.DEL/12/21 OSCE+), Canada (PC.DEL/18/21 OSCE+), Bosnia and Herzegovina (PC.DEL/7/21 OSCE+), Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova (PC.DEL/9/21 OSCE+), United States of America (Annex 2), Mongolia, Japan (Partner for Co-operation), Afghanistan (Partner for Co-operation)

Agenda item 2: REVIEW OF CURRENT ISSUES

None

Agenda item 3: ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- (a) *Farewell to the Permanent Representative of Greece to the OSCE, Ambassador A. Zannos*: Chairperson, Dean of the Permanent Council (Liechtenstein), Greece
- (b) *Farewell to the Permanent Representative of the United States of America to the OSCE, Ambassador J. S. Gilmore III*: Chairperson, Dean of the Permanent Council (Liechtenstein), United States of America (PC.DEL/16/21)

4. Next meeting:

Thursday, 21 January 2021, at 10 a.m., via video teleconference



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

PC.JOUR/1298
14 January 2020
Annex 1

Original: ENGLISH

1298th Plenary Meeting
PC Journal No. 1298, Agenda item 1

STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF ARMENIA

Madam Chairperson,

The delegation of Armenia warmly welcomes at the Permanent Council the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sweden, H.E. Ann Linde and thanks her for presenting the programme and priorities of the Swedish Chairmanship.

Distinguished Chairperson-in-Office,

Armenia from the very beginning unreservedly supported Sweden's bid to steer our Organization in 2021. In our support we were guided by, among other things, the determination of Sweden to protect and promote our common European and human rights values that underpin the fundamental principles of this Organization. At the same time, it is obvious that while taking up the OSCE Chairmanship, Sweden will not only benefit from the praiseworthy work carried out during the Albanian Chairmanship and build on last year's achievements but will also face some of the challenges remaining from 2020, including the COVID-19 pandemic and the consequences of the recent war in Nagorno-Karabakh.

The heavy impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the dire humanitarian consequences of the recent war in Nagorno-Karabakh have been disastrous for the people of Armenia and Artsakh.

From 27 September to 9 November 2020 Azerbaijan launched a premeditated military offensive against Artsakh leading to the most intense and destructive crisis in the region since the 1990s, in grave violation of the ceasefire agreements and international humanitarian law. In what has become the biggest military escalation in times of a global pandemic, Azerbaijan with the direct military and political involvement of Turkey and foreign terrorist fighters carried out massive attacks against Artsakh and its people. The international community witnessed the recruitment, transfer and deployment of foreign terrorist fighters, use of cluster and chemical munitions, deliberate targeting of civilian population, including women, children, humanitarian and medical workers and journalists, destruction of critical civilian infrastructure, torture, inhumane and degrading treatment of prisoners of war, mutilations and other atrocities carried out by Azerbaijani side. The destruction and attempts of appropriation of the Armenian cultural heritage are still ongoing despite the assurances at the highest level. All these unprecedented in their nature and scale recurrences taking place in the area of

responsibility of the OSCE and have revealed the shortcomings and ailments of this Organization.

The inability to properly respond to these emerging challenges and security threats, bearing in mind, first and foremost, the early warning and conflict prevention functions and the competence of this Organization on countering terrorism, was extremely discouraging.

Such passive posture of this Organization in times of security crisis would considerably damage the standing and the relevance of the OSCE within the European security architecture. Unfortunately, this Organization is no longer perceived by many as an organization responsible for security and co-operation in Europe. In this regard, we welcome your willingness to “inspire change, increase trust and security”, which are vital for our ability to try to uphold the OSCE concept of comprehensive security.

Excellency,

After the signing of the trilateral statement of 9 November on ceasefire, Armenia embarked on the process of its implementation in good faith and expects the same responsible behaviour on the part of Azerbaijan. Unfortunately, by disavowing its own signature and in flagrant violation of international humanitarian law, on 11 December, Azerbaijan violated the ceasefire and launched a major offensive operation, occupying the villages of Hin Tagher and Khtsaberd in Artsakh, thereby advancing its military positions in violation of the line of contact established by the trilateral statement. As a result of this offensive, 64 Armenian servicemen were captured. Notably, the Azerbaijani side announced the launching of a prosecution process against the prisoners of war (PoWs) about a month after the capture of the Armenian servicemen, which demonstrates that Azerbaijan is using Armenian prisoners of war as hostages to advance its political agenda.

So far negotiations on this issue did not yield any results. I hope that the immediate and unconditional release and repatriation of the Armenian PoWs and civilian hostages, including three women, which is a purely humanitarian issue, will be pursued also by the Swedish Chairmanship. The civilized world should speak up with one voice and make it clear to the leadership of Azerbaijan that this tactic of intimidation and taking hostages for whatever political purposes will not be tolerated.

Against this background, unfortunately, another violation of the ceasefire took place yesterday, in the central direction of the line of contact between the current positions of Artsakh and Azerbaijan, as a result of which an Armenian soldier was seriously wounded. Armenia strongly condemns this unprovoked violation of the 9 November trilateral statement on cessation of hostility and once again calls on Azerbaijan to honour its commitments.

Distinguished Chairperson-in-Office,

The current situation in Nagorno-Karabakh is the result of a blatant violation of the principles of the Helsinki Final Act, namely refraining from the threat or use of force, peaceful settlement of disputes, equal rights and self-determination of peoples, not to mention the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. Therefore, there should be no illusion that the outcome of the use of force, accompanied with war crimes and violations of international humanitarian law can be the basis for a lasting and sustainable peace.

Excellency,

We welcome your determination to support and contribute to the resolution of conflicts in the OSCE area. We positively note that, as Chairmanship of the OSCE and a member of the Minsk Group, Sweden will continue to support the efforts of the Minsk Group Co-Chairs for a peaceful, comprehensive and sustainable resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. Lasting and sustainable peace in the region should be achieved only through the comprehensive resolution of the conflict that will include the status of Nagorno-Karabakh based on the realization of the right of self-determination of the people of Artsakh, de-occupation of its territory, ensuring the safe and dignified return of the displaced population to their homes and preservation of the cultural and religious heritage of the region. This should be done through negotiations within the international recognized framework of the Minsk Group Co-Chairs.

In conclusion, the delegation of Armenia wishes you and your able team a successful and productive Chairmanship. Please, rest assured that Sweden can count on Armenia's constructive engagement in your efforts to restore the relevance of the OSCE as a genuine security organization. We also look forward to co-operating with your Chairmanship during the trimester of Armenia's FSC Chairmanship.

I thank you.



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

PC.JOUR/1298
14 January 2021
Annex 2

Original: ENGLISH

1298th Plenary Meeting
PC Journal No. 1298, Agenda item 1

**STATEMENT BY
THE DELEGATION OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA**

Foreign Minister Linde,

The United States welcomes you to the Permanent Council as OSCE Chairperson-in-Office for 2021. I do want to begin by addressing the storming of the US Capitol on 6 January in Washington D.C., which aimed to disrupt the work of America's elected representatives. As Secretary Pompeo said, lawlessness, rioting, and violence are always unacceptable. Representatives from across the US political spectrum have called for those responsible to be held to account under law, and that process is ongoing. Our democratic process in the United States will continue. President-elect Biden will be inaugurated on 20 January. Our democracy has been tested in the past, and it will be tested again in the future. That we are tested, should never cause anyone – allies, friends, or anyone who chooses to become an adversary – to doubt the strength of America's democratic institutions or our people. We appreciate the words of friends and partners around the world who expressed their faith in the strength of the United States' democracy – including yours, Foreign Minister Linde.

Foreign Minister Linde,

We welcome your clear statement of your top priorities for the OSCE in 2021 and look forward to working together on these important issues. The first of these is to safeguard the European security order by defending and championing the principles of the Helsinki Final Act and the goals of the Paris Charter. We agree that this should be our overarching priority this year. Unless we all demonstrate the political will to abide by these principles and commitments, the Organization overall becomes weaker and less effective, and the peace and security of the OSCE region would be in jeopardy.

Unfortunately, today, one participating State continues to show contempt for the OSCE's foundational principles through repeated, blatant, purposeful challenges to the resolve of this Organization. I note the different approach that is being taken now to regional security by Russia, considering that OSCE principles and the Final Act were established together with Russian leadership. But we see this change now in Russia's ongoing aggression in Ukraine, its occupation of parts of Georgia, its continued military presence in Moldova, its support for the ongoing crackdown in Belarus, its deepening repression within its own borders and malign activity abroad, and its increasingly sophisticated use of hybrid methods

to undermine security and democratic systems. These efforts directly flout one of the core principles we all committed to uphold in 1975: to respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of every participating State.

In Crimea, Moscow continues to actively punish those who oppose its occupation, notably Crimean Tatars and ethnic Ukrainians. The United States will never recognize Russia's purported annexation of Crimea and will continue to hold Russia accountable for its aggression in Ukraine. Whatever security advantage Russia thinks that it has achieved it has been at the sacrifice of the approaches of Member States and the view of Member States towards the Russian Federation as a result of its activities in Crimea, and this is in fact a price that has been paid.

Foreign Minister Linde,

We welcome Sweden's plan to reappoint Ambassador Heidi Grau as Special Representative in Ukraine and in the Trilateral Contact Group. We reaffirm our strong and unwavering commitment to the Special Monitoring Mission, whose presence and reporting on daily activities of violence has helped stabilize that conflict. We owe it to the SMM leadership, to all of the brave monitors, and to everyone with an interest in a strong European security environment to ensure the Mission can operate freely and without hindrance so it may carry out the mandate established by this Permanent Council.

Another of Sweden's stated priorities for 2021 is to work towards resolving the conflicts within the OSCE area. You have the strong support of the United States in these efforts. As you said earlier this month, Foreign Minister Linde, "the OSCE can serve as a crucial multilateral platform to tackle these challenges and build stronger societies together."

We need to maintain special focus on the situation in Belarus and press for progress on the recommendations of the Moscow Mechanism report. We continue to strongly support Sweden and Albania's joint efforts to facilitate a genuine dialogue, which would include representatives of the Belarusian Coordination Council. The so-called "All Belarusian People's Assembly" which is being planned for February appears to fall dramatically short of a genuine dialogue within that country. The OSCE is well-positioned to support the democratic aspirations of the Belarusian people if given the opportunity to engage.

The United States also welcomes Sweden's support for the efforts of the Minsk Group Co-Chairs to help the sides negotiate a long-term political settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. We appreciate Sweden's invitation for Ambassador Andrzej Kasprzyk to continue his work, and welcome Swedish Colonel Claes Nilsson's appointment as Head of the High-Level Planning Group.

Foreign Minister Linde,

We strongly believe we must make advances this year in the OSCE's politico-military dimension. The United States is honoured to serve as the Chairmanship of the Forum for Security Co-operation for the first trimester of this year, and we hope we can advance our shared goals with respect to the European security order. A lack of military transparency and predictability fuels mistrust and risks dangerous misunderstandings. For this reason, the United States joins the Swedish Chairperson-in-Office – as well as the overwhelming

majority of participating States – in committing to modernizing the Vienna Document. We are also pleased to convene the 9 and 10 February High-Level Military Doctrine Seminar held every five years among participating States' military leadership. The United States welcomes Sweden's interest in strengthening the OSCE's activities on the women, peace, and security agenda. In parallel, we continue to support the Structured Dialogue as a venue for frank exchanges on both current and long-standing security challenges and evolving threat perceptions.

We strongly welcome Sweden's third stated priority, Foreign Minister Linde, to highlight the OSCE's concept of comprehensive security, with special emphasis on democracy, equality, and freedom of speech, including for members of the media. Nowhere are our efforts on these principles more visible than at the OSCE's annual Human Dimension Implementation Meeting, or HDIM. We could not hold this meeting as intended in 2020 due to the pandemic. I know Sweden shares the US view that the HDIM must be held this year. It is a pivotal part of the work we do. In addition, we need to ensure undiminished civil society participation in the HDIM and other OSCE forums.

We also look forward to co-operation in the Second Dimension and believe it can be an area of demonstrated meaningful OSCE action on areas such as environmental security, women's economic empowerment, and anti-corruption. On that front, we welcome Sweden's intention to support the US University of Washington Professor Anita Ramasastry as the new Special Representative on Combating Corruption.

Of course, all these efforts require sufficient resources. Consistent with the goals and principles that we have reiterated regularly, the United States supports the latest revision of the 2021 Unified Budget put forward by Sweden. This represents a shift in the United States' policy as a commitment to programmes and to the people who do the work of the OSCE, particularly in the Secretariat and in the other organizations. I remind people that former Secretary General Thomas Greminger was an eloquent spokesperson for the sufficient funding of the OSCE, and while the United States has not adopted his approach in its entirety, he was very persuasive in his support for the OSCE.

Although we continue to see zero nominal growth as the optimal outcome, exceptional times demand exceptional measures, and we want to ensure that the Organization and its new leaders have a firm financial foundation to deal with the significant challenges currently threatening our common security. It is our hope that the participating States will come to consensus on the budget soon. If the United States is to adopt this exception, which will result in the United States providing additional funding, then we expect similar flexibility, co-operation and commitment in the support of this budget.

Madam Foreign Minister,

The United States will work closely with the Swedish Chairmanship to defend OSCE mission mandates, implement our collective decisions, and ensure that all participating States live up to our shared principles and commitments. We wish Sweden every success in 2021.