

Translation

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National statement
by Heiko Maas, Member of the German Bundestag,
Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs,

at the OSCE Ministerial Council

Milan, 6 December 2018

(As delivered)

My friend Enzo,
Esteemed colleagues,
Secretary General,

First of all, I would like to thank you, Enzo, for inviting us to Milan and for Italy's great commitment to the OSCE and thus to Europe's security.

Today, this commitment is more crucial than at any time since the end of the Cold War. The security situation in Europe has palpably worsened for all of us:

- Russia is violating the INF Treaty. Thus a key building block of the European security architecture threatens to come loose.
- We are very concerned about the deployment of nuclear-capable missiles in Kaliningrad.
- As a result of rapid developments in military technology, it is often hard to distinguish between conventional and nuclear threats.

If we want to preserve peace and stability in Europe, we must therefore make arms control into the key component of our diplomacy once again.

The question of binding rules for nuclear weapons systems is central here. We need a genuine exchange on questions of strategic stability and on escalation risks between the USA, Europe and Russia.

We need to uphold everything that has been agreed in past decades and remains relevant – including the New START Treaty.

But that is not enough as our rules are in part flawed and have often not kept pace with technological developments.

That is why we need a new, more comprehensive approach to arms control which incorporates *all* elements of stability and security in Europe:

- This means, *firstly*, We need to have a serious discussion on increasing transparency on ballistic and cruise missiles. After all, an uncontrolled race for such weapons heightens tensions in Europe and around the world.
- We want, *secondly*, to ensure that international law standards keep pace with the development of highly modern weapons and will host an international conference to this end next year in Berlin. The OSCE furthermore plays a pioneering role internationally when it comes to confidence-building measures in cyber conflicts. This is a role we should further strengthen.
- And we must, *thirdly*, also renew the conventional arms control architecture and here make more intensive use of our Structured Dialogue.

The OSCE is the only multilateral organisation across Europe which has the necessary expertise and the instruments to deliver on the promise of security in Europe by engaging in arms control, disarmament and economic cooperation and strengthening human rights. We would be wrong not to make better use of this – given the concerns we all share when it comes to Europe’s security.

Esteemed colleagues,

If we want to win back trust and thus security, then dialogue for the sake of dialogue is not going to be enough. The people in the 57 countries of the OSCE expect us to come up with concrete solutions to conflicts and credible contributions to reduce tension. But to do so, we need to agree once more that security in Europe can only happen if we work together.

I wish Slovakia every success in their work to consolidate this basic consensus in the OSCE in the coming year and transform it into action. We will do everything we can to help.

Thank you very much.