

Statement by Swedish Minister for Foreign Affairs Ann Linde

26th Meeting of the OSCE Ministerial Council, Bratislava, 5 December 2019

As delivered

Many thanks Miroslav Lajčák and Slovakia for your tireless efforts as Chair and for hosting us here in Bratislava. I also want to take this opportunity to give our strong support to the incoming Albanian Chairmanship. Sweden aligns itself fully with the EU Statement.

I understand we have a consensus on our bid for chairmanship for 2021. We are truly grateful for the confidence of all participating States and eager to take on the responsibility.

We intend to base our programme for 2021 on the efforts of previous Chairmanships. We will focus on OSCE core business and our commonly agreed principles and commitments. The European Security Order, the concept of comprehensive security, as well as democracy, human rights and equal rights for all, will feature high on our agenda. Likewise, we will continue the important work of resolving the conflicts in the OSCE area. The primacy of diplomacy is a hallmark of the OSCE – it will continue to be our approach under a Swedish chairmanship.

We will also continue the ongoing efforts to make the role of Chairmanship more accessible for all 57 participating States, by making it financially less burdensome, leaner and more cost-efficient.

Colleagues, ladies and gentlemen, maintaining our existing security architecture and the commonly agreed European Security Order – as enshrined in the Helsinki Final Act and the Charter of Paris – is a core security policy interest for Sweden and, I believe, our whole region. The right of states to territorial integrity and sovereignty, and to freely choose their own security arrangements is not negotiable.

This year, we have seen further violations of fundamental freedoms and a deteriorating human rights situation in parts of the OSCE area. To reverse these

trends, we must return to the concept of comprehensive security and remind ourselves that respect for human rights, democracy and the rule of law, are fundamental to security both within and between states. We must do more to include women in the work to promote peace and security, and we must continue to involve civil society and free media in our efforts.

The recent positive developments in Ukraine provide grounds for some optimism. At the same time, let's not forget that the conflict started with violations of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity. The conflict can only be resolved if these violations are reversed. Similarly, the protracted conflicts in other parts of the OSCE area – in Georgia, Moldova and the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict– need to be resolved in line with OSCE principles.

I look forward to continuing to work with you all to achieve these aims.

Thank you!