

Chairmanship: Albania

1262nd PLENARY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

1. Date: Thursday, 12 March 2020

Opened: 10.15 a.m.

Closed: 12.50 p.m.

2. Chairperson: Ambassador I. Hasani

Before taking up the agenda, the Chairperson informed the Council about the Chairmanship's response to the evolving COVID-19 virus outbreak. The United Kingdom, the Russian Federation, Canada, Croatia-European Union, Turkey and Italy commented on the situation.

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

Agenda item 1: REPORT BY THE CO-ORDINATOR OF OSCE ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL ACTIVITIES

Chairperson, Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities (SEC.GAL/35/20 OSCE+), Croatia-European Union (with the candidate countries Albania, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia; the country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate country Bosnia and Herzegovina; the European Free Trade Association countries Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway, members of the European Economic Area; as well as Andorra, Armenia, Georgia, Moldova, San Marino and Ukraine, in alignment) (PC.DEL/317/20), Russian Federation (PC.DEL/283/20), Georgia (PC.DEL/294/20 OSCE+), Turkey (PC.DEL/290/20 OSCE+), United States of America (PC.DEL/327/20), Azerbaijan (PC.DEL/281/20 OSCE+), Belarus (PC.DEL/284/20 OSCE+), Serbia (PC.DEL/282/20 OSCE+), United Kingdom (PC.DEL/285/20 OSCE+), Ukraine (PC.DEL/321/20), Liechtenstein (PC.DEL/279/20 OSCE+), Armenia (PC.DEL/332/20), Kyrgyzstan (PC.DEL/303/20 Restr.), Kazakhstan (PC.DEL/306/20 OSCE+), Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia-European Union

Agenda item 2: INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

Chairperson, Sweden (also on behalf of Albania and Slovakia), United States of America (PC.DEL/329/20), Canada (PC.DEL/313/20 OSCE+), Croatia-European Union (with the candidate countries Albania, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia; the country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate country Bosnia and Herzegovina; as well as Andorra, Armenia, Georgia, Moldova, San Marino and Ukraine, in alignment) (PC.DEL/318/20), Belarus (PC.DEL/286/20 OSCE+), Turkey (PC.DEL/322/20 OSCE+), United Kingdom (PC.DEL/287/20 OSCE+), Norway (PC.DEL/280/20), Sweden (also on behalf of Andorra, Bulgaria, Canada, Cyprus, Finland, France, Germany, Liechtenstein, Malta, Mongolia, San Marino, Serbia and Slovenia) (Annex), Armenia (PC.DEL/331/20), Georgia (PC.DEL/296/20 OSCE+), Iceland, Kyrgyzstan

Agenda item 3: REVIEW OF CURRENT ISSUES

Chairperson

- (a) *Russia's ongoing aggression against Ukraine and illegal occupation of Crimea:* Ukraine (PC.DEL/307/20), Croatia-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 Georgia and Moldova, in alignment) (PC.DEL/320/20), Canada (PC.DEL/314/20 OSCE+), United Kingdom (PC.DEL/289/20 OSCE+), Turkey, United States of America (PC.DEL/330/20), Switzerland (PC.DEL/295/20 OSCE+)
- (b) *Situation in Ukraine and the need to implement the Minsk agreements:* Russian Federation (PC.DEL/304/20), Germany
- (c) *Human rights violations in Lithuania:* Russian Federation (PC.DEL/308/20), Lithuania (PC.DEL/305/20 OSCE+)
- (d) *Situation of Jehovah's Witnesses in the Russian Federation:* Croatia-European Union (with the candidate countries Albania, Montenegro and North Macedonia; the European Free Trade Association country Iceland, member of the European Economic Area; as well as Georgia and Ukraine, in alignment) (PC.DEL/325/20), United Kingdom (PC.DEL/299/20 OSCE+), Russian Federation (PC.DEL/288/20 OSCE+)
- (e) *The death penalty in Belarus:* Croatia-European Union (with the candidate countries Albania, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia; the country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate country Bosnia and Herzegovina; the European Free Trade Association countries Iceland and Liechtenstein, members of the European Economic Area; as well as Andorra, Georgia and San Marino, in alignment) (PC.DEL/323/20), Belarus (PC.DEL/300/20 OSCE+)

Agenda item 4: REPORT ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE
CHAIRMANSHIP-IN-OFFICE

- (a) *Announcement of the distribution of a written report of the Chairmanship-in-Office (CIO.GAL/30/20 OSCE+):* Chairperson
- (b) *Circular note on the evolving COVID-19 virus outbreak (CIO.INF/26/20 OSCE+):* Chairperson
- (c) *Call for nominations for positions of heads and deputy heads of field operations:* Chairperson
- (d) *Cancellation of the address of the Chairperson-in-Office to the Council of Europe, planned to take place on 11 March 2020:* Chairperson

Agenda item 5: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY GENERAL

Announcement of the distribution of a written report of the Secretary General (SEC.GAL/38/20 OSCE+): Secretary General

Agenda item 6: ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- (a) *2020 Defender of Democracy Award:* Montenegro (also on behalf of Canada, Denmark, the Netherlands, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and the United States of America) (PC.DEL/311/20 OSCE+)
- (b) *Parliamentary elections in Mongolia, to be held on 24 June 2020:* Mongolia (PC.DEL/309/20 OSCE+)
- (c) *Elections of the members of the Majlisi Namoyandagon (Assembly of Representatives) of the Majlisi Oli (Supreme Assembly) of Tajikistan, held on 1 March 2020:* Tajikistan (PC.DEL/312/20 OSCE+), Russian Federation (PC.DEL/291/20 OSCE+), Belarus (PC.DEL/302/20 OSCE+), Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan (PC.DEL/316/20 OSCE+), Uzbekistan, Turkey (PC.DEL/326/20 OSCE+), Armenia (PC.DEL/333/20 OSCE+), United Kingdom
- (d) *Trial in connection with the downing of Malaysian Airlines Boeing 777-200, flight MH17 on 17 July 2014:* Netherlands (also on behalf of Australia (Partner for Co-operation)) (PC.DEL/315/20 OSCE+), Croatia-European Union (with the candidate countries Albania, Montenegro and North Macedonia; the country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate country Bosnia and Herzegovina; the European Free Trade Association countries Iceland and Liechtenstein, members of the European Economic Area; as well as San Marino and Ukraine, in alignment) (PC.DEL/319/20), Ukraine (PC.DEL/324/20/Rev.1), Russian Federation (PC.DEL/310/20 OSCE+), Belgium (PC.DEL/301/20 OSCE+), United States of America (PC.DEL/328/20), United Kingdom (PC.DEL/292/20 OSCE+)

4. Next meeting:

Thursday, 19 March 2020, at 10 a.m., in the Neuer Saal



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

PC.JOUR/1262
12 March 2020
Annex

Original: ENGLISH

1262nd Plenary Meeting

PC Journal No. 1262, Agenda item 2

**STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF SWEDEN
(ALSO ON BEHALF OF ANDORRA, BULGARIA, CANADA, CYPRUS,
FINLAND, FRANCE, GERMANY, LIECHTENSTEIN, MALTA,
MONGOLIA, SAN MARINO, SERBIA AND SLOVENIA)**

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the current women ambassadors and representatives to the OSCE: Andorra, Bulgaria, Canada, Cyprus, Finland, France, Germany, Liechtenstein, Malta, Mongolia, San Marino, Serbia, Slovenia and Sweden (14 out of 57).

We commend the Albanian Chairmanship for including International Women's Day on the agenda of today's meeting and for prioritizing the topic of gender equality throughout their Chairmanship.

We represent different countries of different sizes, from east to west and north to south of Vienna, all with our own national positions. Today we stand united in our call for gender equality and for inclusive security.

We stand together in our commitment to the OSCE core principles and values, as enshrined in the Helsinki Final Act, the Charter of Paris and the Istanbul Document. Translating these commitments into action is not an easy task, but it is the foundation to accomplishing comprehensive security. Therefore, one of our main objectives continues to be making sure that the implementation of these commitments remains high on the agenda of the OSCE.

It is worth remembering that the Helsinki Final Act declares the importance for the participating States of the OSCE to co-operate with non-governmental organizations, including women's organizations, thus recognizing already 45 years ago the importance of collective societal efforts in mobilizing populations for equality. Cross-dimensional mobilization is a key factor in reaching our long-term goal. It is our generation's duty to carry forward the work of the women and men who came before us, and to provide the generation that comes after with the best possible opportunities to continue our efforts in reaching equality, for all. This will be the purpose of the Generation Equality Forum convened by

UN Women this year. As women ambassadors and representatives to the OSCE, we are committed to be part of the Generation Equality and to make gender equality a reality.

Since Helsinki, we continue to build better and more inclusive structures, we have shattered glass ceilings, and we persist in challenging and limiting prejudicial gender stereotypes. Today, the OSCE serves as a reliable regional platform where civil society organizations, participating States, students, experts and researchers meet to share experiences, exchange ideas and have dialogues that contribute to realizing gender equality and to implementing our commitments thus leading to a higher level of security for all. This makes the Organization a unique facilitator of knowledge that contributes to better policies and practices all over the OSCE area, and beyond.

Gender mainstreaming into OSCE activities is an essential component of the OSCE's comprehensive approach to security. We strongly support the important work that the OSCE Gender Section and the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights do in this regard.

Inequality, discrimination, and sexual harassment are unfortunately still part of the reality in our Organization. All of us are responsible for ending this and for ensuring that there are effective and reliable mechanisms to address such behaviours and create working environments conducive to gender equality. It is high time we treat these behaviours with a zero tolerance principle for the whole OSCE, beginning with its Secretariat.

As participating States, we need to keep working hard to show leadership in building equality and bridging gaps. Already at the Istanbul Summit in 1999 the participating States stated the importance of establishing and implementing a gender action plan. In 2004, an action plan was adopted but we regret that as of today it is not being fully implemented. In this regard, we welcome the holding of the third Gender Review Conference, that is scheduled for 29 and 30 June this year. This Conference will give both the Organization and the participating States an opportunity to take stock of the work that has been done, to assess where we have made progress, where we have stagnated, and where we have seen backsliding and deterioration. We will be able to explore how to more effectively implement our commitments in all three dimensions, and we look forward to working constructively together with all of you towards promoting gender equality as well as eliminating all forms of violence against women and girls, gender-based inequalities and discrimination against women and girls in the OSCE area.

Mr. Chairperson,

Equality has the potential to offer solidarity and understanding in a world with increasing differences and polarization. The strive for equality belongs to all of us, not only to a country, a group or an organization. Gender equality, the inclusion and empowerment of women and girls is not and should not be cast as a "women's issue". Gender equality is a matter of human rights, democracy, and of social and economic development such as digital transformation. Making full use of women's and girls' potential makes a society stronger and more resilient, enabling an inclusive and comprehensive security, for all.

In 1875, Victor Hugo wrote: “*Une moitié de l’espèce humaine est hors de l’égalité, il faut l’y faire rentrer. Ce sera là une des grandes gloires de notre grand siècle: donner pour contrepoids au droit de l’homme le droit de la femme.*”

Let us all join forces now to realize women’s rights for an equal future.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson. I request that this statement be attached to the journal of the day.