We are gathered in one of the world's foremost centres of diplomacy, a place that has shaped the course of history.

It was here in Switzerland that the arduous negotiations for the Helsinki Final Act unfolded in 1973, amidst great geopolitical uncertainty and seemingly insurmountable obstacles to diplomacy. Yet, our predecessors recognised the fundamental need to create a vital space for dialogue, establishing the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe.

Today, the OSCE's role in managing crises is as crucial as ever. The Organization’s consensus principle underpins our commitment to sustainable decision-making, despite the associated challenges.

Long-term solutions are never found on the battlefield but through adhering to our commitments and engaging in constructive dialogue conducted in good faith. An inclusive organization like the OSCE, providing a platform for dialogue among its 57 participating States, including Ukraine and Russia, is indispensable for this purpose.

Excellencies,

Respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity within internationally recognised borders are central principles guiding relations between OSCE participating States, as set forth in the Helsinki Final Act and in conformity with the UN Charter.

As the current Chair of the OSCE and an elected member of the UN Security Council, Malta remains committed to our principled approach of urging Russia to withdraw from the entire territory of Ukraine and bring its war of aggression to an end.

The escalating death toll and the anguish inflicted upon countless families are unacceptable. This is why we stand firmly by Ukraine in this time of crisis and human suffering.

My first visit as OSCE Chair-in-Office was to Kyiv, reinforcing our unwavering commitment to strengthening Ukraine’s resilience against the devastating humanitarian consequences of this war.
Since the beginning of the war, the OSCE has remained focussed on addressing the situation in Ukraine through its activities, discussions, and tailor-made projects across all three dimensions of its comprehensive approach to security.

The Organization has also provided an important platform for accountability based on the shared principles and commitments to which all 57 participating states agreed to.

To safeguard the Helsinki Decalogue, we can draw on the OSCE’s unique conflict management instruments and extensive experience, which can be tailored and used flexibly in Ukraine, enabling us to respond precisely to the needs arising from a peace settlement.

As Chair of the OSCE, serving 57 participating States, I reaffirm our determination to support and facilitate, if required, a meaningful, result-oriented dialogue to build peace in Ukraine.

We are willing and prepared to fully engage, mobilising the OSCE’s resources to address the consequences of conflict and to advance and implement any future settlement.

We also stand ready to leverage complementarity and deepen our cooperation with international partners invested in the same objective of building peace, security, and stability.

I take this opportunity to renew our call for the immediate and unconditional release of the three detained former OSCE SMM officials. Securing their safe return to their families and friends remains our top priority.

As we approach half a century since the Helsinki Final Act, now more than ever, we need to return to the OSCE’s founding vision, where sovereignty and territorial integrity are respected, and where our people can live in true and lasting peace, free from any threat to their security.

Thank you.