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## **CLOSING SESSION OF THE 30<sup>th</sup> OSCE MINISTERIAL COUNCIL MEETING**

**1 December 2023, Skopje, North Macedonia**

### **STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF CANADA**

*Speaker #8*

Mr Chairperson,

In addition to the statements that Canada has joined, I would like to make a few remarks in my national capacity.

I will begin by thanking the government of North Macedonia, and particularly the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and North Macedonia's OSCE delegation for their warm hospitality during this year's Ministerial Council and at the various meetings that you have hosted in your beautiful country over the course of this past year.

I would like to reiterate Parliamentary Secretary Oliphant's thanks to the staff of the OSCE for their creativity, determination and resilience in continuing to uphold the mandate of this organization in the difficult circumstances it is facing. And I would like to extend the same thanks to the team that comprises North Macedonia's delegation in Vienna. We could not have asked for better partners in a challenging year and I underscore this in particular in Canada's role as Chair of the Forum for Security Cooperation.

Mr. Chair,

While this organization has faced many challenges over the last year, the vast majority of participating States have displayed an overwhelming unity on the most important issues: on the need to uphold OSCE commitments; on support for the work of the Secretariat, the autonomous institutions and field missions; on the importance of election monitoring; on the necessity of agreeing on a budget that provides the organization with the resources it needs to accomplish its mandate; on the holding of the mandated meetings; on the need to address the existential threat posed by climate change; on the importance of strengthening democratic institutions and human rights protections; and, most urgently, on the condemnation of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine.

This overall unity of purpose, and a willingness to engage in good faith where we disagree, is common to almost all participating States. There is, of course, one glaring exception – the Russian Federation.

In its full-scale invasion of Ukraine, Russia has demonstrated its complete rejection of the UN Charter and our shared OSCE commitments. In its incessant targeting of civilians and civilian objects and in the atrocities committed in occupied areas, it has shown its disregard for its human rights and International Humanitarian Law obligations. And the Russian Federation has sadly pulled Belarus in its wake, making it not only complicit to its act of aggression against Ukraine, but also to its persistent attempts to undermine this organization from within.

Canada stands with Ukraine as it defends its independence, freedom and democracy.

Canada also stands for effective multilateralism.

The OSCE was created in an era of division, as a platform for finding common ground. While the OSCE is facing challenges, we remain convinced that it can continue to play an important role in providing direct benefits to the people of the region and in restoring the Euro-Atlantic security architecture. As you and your excellent team have demonstrated so clearly, Mr. Chair, it is about the people.

In this context, we very much look forward to working with Malta as the Chair-in-Office in 2024. We have no doubt that Malta will lead the organisation in a principled manner and uphold and defend the OSCE's core principles and commitments. We will stand with them in those efforts.

In closing, Canada would like to sincerely thank you again and the entire Chairpersonship team for your extraordinary efforts this year. Canada applauds the firm and principled leadership you have provided as Chair. As Chair of the Forum for Security Cooperation this trimester, we particularly appreciated this close collaboration, and we would like to offer to you, Ambassador Djundev, and to your outstanding team, our most sincere gratitude, respect and admiration.

Thank you.

I would like to request that this statement be attached to the Journal of the day.