

26th OSCE Ministerial Meeting

Statement by the Estonian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Urmas Reinsalu December 5, 2019, Bratislava, Slovakia

Mr. Chairman, Excellences, Ladies and Gentlemen,

- I thank Slovakia for hosting this important meeting.
- In response to the remarks made by my Russian colleague before, I kindly emphasize that the Estonian citizenship laws are adequate and in full accordance with the international law.
- After 11 years since the beginning of the conflict in Georgia and 5 years in Ukraine, we are still today far from the long awaited peace. All OSCE participating States have agreed to abide by common principles and commitments, starting from the Helsinki Final Act. Yet, this has not been the reality and we have seen both, breaches in the international law, and violations of sovereignty and territorial integrity of Georgia and Ukraine.
- We are deeply concerned about the increasingly deteriorating security, humanitarian and human rights situation in the occupied regions, due to Russia's illegal and destabilizing actions. Thus, we call upon the Russian Federation to stay committed to the principles agreed in the Helsinki Final Act and take all the necessary measures to de-escalate and end the interference. Furthermore, we are gravely concerned by the detention of Georgian Dr Vazha Gaprindashvili, in the region of South Ossetia and call for his immediate release.

- Secondly, only by upholding the Helsinki Principles and using the OSCE instruments and mechanisms, can we challenge the potential destabilising effects of the changes occurring on the global scale, the transformation of power centers and threats to the rules based international order.
- This includes the arms control in the OSCE. We emphasize the commitment to existing conventional arms control instruments and obligations. The breaches of international law and the conflicts I mentioned earlier, as well as (Russia's) selective implementation of the Vienna Document and the Open Skies Treaty, have seriously challenged trust and military transparency in Europe.
- With this distrust, modernizing the Vienna Document will help to increase military transparency, predictability and trust. It has to remain a matter of priority.
- Thirdly, full respect for human rights, fundamental freedoms and democratic principles are essential for a viable security environment and peaceful societies. We must all value the work of OSCE's institutions and field missions in assisting participating States in the implementation of their OSCE commitments.
- As of January 1, 2020, Estonia is honored for the first time to assume the responsibility of serving as an elected member of the United Nations Security Council. Rest assured that we will uphold the OSCE and its values and principles also in our work there.
- I thank our Slovak hosts and wish Albania all success in taking up the responsibilities of chairing the OSCE in 2020. I also have the pleasure to welcome and express our support to Sweden and Poland in their readiness to lead the OSCE during 2021 and 2022.