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Statement on the OSCE's role in supporting security sector governance and reform as part of the OSCE's comprehensive approach to security

Ministerial Council, 5-6 December 2019, Bratislava

This statement is delivered on behalf of the following participating States:

Albania, Andorra, Armenia, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Moldova, Mongolia, Montenegro, Netherlands, North Macedonia, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Serbia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom, United States and Slovakia

We acknowledge that security sector governance and reform is a crucial part of the OSCE's comprehensive approach to security, based on existing principles and commitments and closely related to the politico-military, economic and environmental, and human dimensions. We share the view that security sector governance (SSG) relates to the principles of good governance and how they apply to security provision, management, and oversight. Security sector governance means that the security sector is subject to the same standards of good governance as any other public sector, and that the security sector is to provide security to the State and its people in an accountable and effective way, within a framework of democratic civilian control, rule of law, respect for human rights, and the promotion of gender equality. SSG/R promotes the need for a holistic approach to reform, which takes into account the inter-linkages between various actors and components of the security sector and contributes significantly to overcoming structural barriers between the OSCE's institutions and dimensions. In today's world of complex and interdependent security challenges (such as corruption, violent extremism that leads to terrorism, transnational organized crime and trafficking in human beings), national security sectors need to adapt to a dynamic and changing environment. An inclusive, accountable and democratically controlled security sector with full respect for human rights and the rule of law can promote confidence and trust between society and state and stability in the entire OSCE region.

As reflected in UN Security Council Resolution 2151 (2014) on security sector reform, but also in the UN's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, SSG/R plays an important role in contributing to conflict prevention, peace and security. As a regional arrangement under Chapter VIII of the UN Charter, the OSCE can make a significant contribution to these global initiatives. We believe, in partnerships with others, we should further build on the OSCE's comparative advantages that lie in its comprehensive and regional approach to security.

We acknowledge the OSCE has a long track record in supporting participating States in strengthening the governance of their security sectors and undertaking reforms in line with the Organization's commitments. We welcome the progress made over the last years towards a more coherent and co-ordinated OSCE approach. At the same time, we believe that more could be done by taking full advantage of our available tools and expertise. The OSCE could become more efficient in this sector by adopting the following measures: place greater emphasis on good governance, strengthen co-operation across all three dimensions of security, further integrate SSG/R into the OSCE conflict cycle toolbox, make more efficient use of limited available resources, and enable increased co-ordination with other actors in this field.

We welcome the efforts of the Slovak OSCE Chairmanship towards a common understanding of SSG/R in the context of the OSCE. In addition, we deem it important to continue regular discussions on SSG/R, as an important step in acknowledging the role of the OSCE in this area.

We underscore that the following principles – all embedded in our existing commitments – should guide the OSCE's support to national SSG/R processes:

- *National ownership*: support provided by the OSCE should be based on a request for assistance from that participating State and aligned with its national priorities for reform;
- *Good and democratic security sector governance*: OSCE's support should foster of democratic civilian control, rule of law and full respect for human rights;
- *The promotion of gender equality*: an essential element is the full, equal and active involvement of women in SSG/R and that women's participation in the security sector on a strategic and operational level is promoted;
- *Holistic and inclusive*: a cross-dimensional approach to SSG/R support, based on the OSCE's comprehensive concept of security, is required to take account of the holistic nature of national SSG/R processes, while promoting the meaningful participation of all segments of society and the engagement of civil society;
- *Responsive to the security needs of all people, including youth*: SSG/R support should take into consideration needs of all segments of society and entail approaches that are gender-responsive and respect human rights. All support should be grounded in a thorough understanding of the context and based on a comprehensive needs assessment;
- *Co-ordination and co-operation*: OSCE activities should be co-ordinated with other actors at the local, national, regional and international level, building on its added value and comparative advantage.