

The OSCE Secretariat bears no responsibility for the content of this document and circulates it without altering its content. The distribution by OSCE Conference Services of this document is without prejudice to OSCE decisions, as set out in documents agreed by OSCE participating States.

MC.DEL/32/21
3 December 2021

ENGLISH
Original: RUSSIAN

**STATEMENT BY
MR. ALEXANDER LUKASHEVICH, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE
RUSSIAN FEDERATION TO THE OSCE, AT THE CLOSING SESSION OF THE
TWENTY-EIGHTH MEETING OF THE
OSCE MINISTERIAL COUNCIL**

Stockholm, 3 December 2021

Madam Chairperson,
Esteemed colleagues,

First of all, allow me to express our gratitude to the Swedish Chairmanship for the successful holding of this key OSCE event – the Ministerial Council meeting in Stockholm – in a face-to-face format, despite the challenging conditions due to the ongoing coronavirus pandemic. New technologies, even the most advanced ones, will never be able to substitute for face-to-face interaction. The substantively rich exchange of views during the plenary sessions and the working lunch and dinner, and also on the margins of the Ministerial Council meeting, was very useful.

We believe that the practice of reaching agreement on draft Ministerial Council documents prior to the start of the meeting is worth maintaining. It fosters a sense of discipline. Obviously, it is necessary to start the work on draft documents well in advance and to look for solutions, rather than putting things off until the last minute.

Unfortunately, the complex political climate at the OSCE and the acute crisis of trust in relations among the participating States prevented the potential of our Organization from being unlocked fully in terms of reducing politico-military tensions in the Euro-Atlantic area and finding collective responses to common challenges. This became evident during the process of agreeing on Ministerial Council decisions.

Together with a number of other States, Russia put forward a draft declaration on preventing and combating the use of the Internet for terrorist purposes. We are disappointed that the politicized approaches of certain countries deprived us all of the opportunity to work out a Ministerial Council document on this important subject.

At the same time, we are pleased to note that it proved possible to agree on and adopt a decision on strengthening co-operation to address the challenges caused by climate change. This confirms the relevance of the OSCE's complementary role in the global climate process under the aegis of the United Nations. Aspects such as co-operation in mitigating the negative impacts of climate change, the importance of restoration of forests and the increased use of clean energy sources are enshrined in the document.

A defining moment for the OSCE's future was the approval of Finland as the holder of the OSCE Chairmanship in 2025, the Organization's golden jubilee. We congratulate our Finnish colleagues and hope

that this landmark event will restore our Organization to its historic mission of working to strengthen pan-European security.

Fundamental disagreements made it impossible to adopt the Stockholm Declaration, a political declaration, that offered a good chance to reaffirm the goals of building a free, democratic, common and indivisible security community, as endorsed at the OSCE Summit in Astana in 2010.

For the second year in a row, agreement could not be reached on a declaration on the impact of COVID-19. The adoption of such a document could send a strong signal that the OSCE countries are capable of maintaining a united front in the face of a common misfortune. We hope that next year this important topic can be dealt with more effectively.

There are plenty of unifying themes at the OSCE. Our interests overlap in many areas where co-operation would be mutually beneficial. Unfortunately, many initiatives are assessed by certain participating States not in terms of their content, but in terms of who authored them. We took a constructive attitude. The Russian delegation worked conscientiously on the drafts proposed by the Chairmanship and carefully reviewed other documents as well.

We would ask the future Polish Chairmanship to take into account one important aspect. The past few years have shown that “gender extremism” in our work does not yield results. Trying to impose non-consensus concepts that only a fraction of the States subscribe to takes up a lot of time and energy.

The situation in Afghanistan calls for increased co-operation in countering transnational threats, above all terrorism but also illicit drug trafficking. The OSCE should maintain a high profile in combating the spread of terrorist ideology, notably via the Internet, social media and the media, and make better use of the potential of the Security Committee of the OSCE Permanent Council in priority areas in the field of counter-terrorism.

In the second dimension, it is important to preserve the depoliticized nature of co-operation and to properly address the crucial topic of the socio-economic consequences of the coronavirus pandemic.

In the human dimension, it is necessary to show respect for the different models of civilizational and societal development. Double standards, lecturing and imperiousness need to be forsworn; ideological dividing lines should not be drawn. It is time to ensure adequate protection of the linguistic and educational rights of national minorities. The glorification of Nazism and the falsification of history must be combated resolutely. The preparation of Ministerial Council declarations to combat intolerance against Christians and Muslims, as mandated by the 2014 Basel Ministerial Council, must finally be undertaken.

We wish our Polish colleagues every success in 2022. We are counting on Poland to structure the OSCE’s work strictly on the basis of the Chairmanship’s mandate, taking due account of the approaches of all participating States.

Thank you for your attention.

I request that this statement be attached to the journal of today’s meeting of the Ministerial Council.