

PC.DEL/1101/17  
24 July 2017

ENGLISH  
Original: ITALIAN

**STATEMENT BY  
THE MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF ITALY,  
MR. ANGELINO ALFANO, AT THE 1155th MEETING OF THE  
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

20 July 2017

**Presentation of the programme of the Italian  
OSCE Chairmanship for 2018**

Mr. Chairperson (Ambassador Clemens Koja),  
Dear Permanent Representatives,

I should like to thank you for inviting me to outline the priorities of the Italian Chairmanship in 2018.

Let me congratulate the Austrian Chairmanship on the excellent work it is doing this year in leading the OSCE, under particularly complex circumstances.

I am also very pleased to welcome the newly appointed heads of the OSCE institutions. I wish them every success in carrying out their mandate.

Thanks to the Austrian Chairmanship and the commitment of all of you, we have achieved consensus on the nominations, in a constructive manner and with a willingness to compromise. This is the right spirit because consensus is not a weakness but a strength.

It is in this same spirit that Italy is preparing to assume the OSCE Chairmanship in 2018. We believe strongly in the mission of this Organization for peace, security and stability. It is an Organization in which the crises and destinies of all of us intersect.

It is an assignment that we assume with a profound sense of responsibility. We intend to accomplish this mission – from Vancouver to Vladivostok – by constantly seeking dialogue and co-operation.

At the same time, we expect, as always, a real sharing of responsibility on the part of all participating States. The Chairmanship certainly cannot resolve these problems on its own. Shared challenges require common solutions, a sense of responsibility and solidarity “multiplied by 57”.

This means finding, in every situation, the most genuine “spirit of Helsinki” and pursuing it in its entirety, with the approach conceived by the founders with such

extraordinary foresight and based on the idea that security is rooted in multiple dimensions: the politico-military, the economic and environmental, and the human.

Finding the “spirit of Helsinki” again does not mean a return to the past but rather rediscovering the spirit that ensured dialogue even during the toughest years of the nuclear threat and building on those foundations a “Helsinki of the twenty-first century” that will break down the wall that too often keeps us apart and that is not in anyone’s interest.

Let me turn first to the Ukrainian crisis. On the one hand, this crisis has called into question the very principles on which the OSCE is based. On the other hand, however, it has demonstrated – once and for all – how much the world needs the OSCE to solve this problem.

In that sense, the establishment of the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine in March 2014 is a unique example of the collective multilateral effort for the peaceful resolution of the conflict. Italy will continue to support and defend this Mission so that it can carry out its mandate in full and in safety.

At the same time, it will be crucial for us to support the endeavours of the Normandy format and the Trilateral Contact Group to achieve a peaceful solution to the crisis. We call for the implementation of the Minsk agreements, with full respect for the sovereignty, territorial integrity, unity and independence of Ukraine.

The crisis in Ukraine is unfortunately not the only challenge. There are so many, too many protracted conflicts that deserve our constant attention. They are hotbeds of tension, and we will commit ourselves to strengthening the OSCE’s activities within the existing formats, for example the Geneva International Discussions on the Georgian conflict of 2008, the negotiation process for a resolution of the Transdniestrian conflict in the “5+2” format, and by supporting the work of the Minsk Group together with the efforts of its three Co-Chairmen to solve the conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh.

Furthermore, during our Chairmanship, we intend to encourage the OSCE to pay greater attention to the challenges emanating from the south, in the Mediterranean basin. The reason is simple: to some, the Mediterranean may seem like a small sea, almost a lake, but some of the most serious threats to peace and security in Europe and the world – from terrorism to the migration crisis – are spreading from its southern basin.

I am also convinced that the Mediterranean dimension of security is complementary, and not an alternative, to the OSCE’s Euro-Asian dimension. Already this year, in chairing the Mediterranean Contact Group, we have committed ourselves to fostering dialogue with all the Partners for Co-operation regarding the threats and opportunities in the Mediterranean.

The crisis posed by migratory flows, in particular, will also be among the priorities of the Italian Chairmanship. We intend to address this issue not only from a security point of view, but also in terms of combating intolerance and discrimination and of highlighting the importance of fostering pluralism, inclusion, and intercultural and interreligious dialogue, which are the foundations of peace and security.

The OSCE Mediterranean Conference in Palermo on 24 and 25 October, where I hope to welcome you and your ministers, will be dedicated to this crisis.

The crisis in the politico-military dimension will be another topic receiving our utmost attention. The arms control regime and confidence- and security-building measures are being violated systematically, applied selectively or do not reflect technological evolution.

There is also a tendency to believe that, in a context of tension, transparency is not an end in itself, forgetting that confidence- and security-building measures and arms control were not conceived as fair-weather tools but, on the contrary, for ensuring the stability and predictability needed to overcome “storms”.

The Italian Chairmanship therefore intends to promote all those initiatives aimed at applying existing measures and to encourage consideration of their adaptation to the changed security conditions.

The Structured Dialogue on current and future challenges to European security is also an instrument that the Italian Chairmanship will continue to support with the aim of investigating the root causes of the tensions, restoring trust, but also updating the tools at our disposal to reflect technological evolution.

This is an Organization that has always been able to produce concrete results when all the States have worked together constructively and in a genuine spirit of shared responsibility.

Let us take the example of cybersecurity. The OSCE has been able to adopt new measures and mechanisms to address this new challenge, but now it is time to fulfil the commitments made, establishing concrete forms of co-operation in the face of an increasingly destabilizing threat.

The Italian Chairmanship intends to make a strong commitment to broadening cybersecurity co-operation. In particular, we believe that it is important to promote partnerships between the public and private sector and the academic and scientific world by identifying and enhancing emerging excellence in the participating States, with specific initiatives aimed at young people.

In this area, young people are a priority. Recently, at the G7 Summit in Taormina, we encouraged our partners to send a strong signal to Internet service providers to put Internet terror offline. This is a dark space that attracts and radicalizes so many, too many young people. I therefore share Austria's emphasis on the role of young people in combating the “narrative of terror” and rejecting the idea that equates immigration with terrorism.

Among the other transnational threats that will be a priority during the Italian Chairmanship is combating illicit trafficking – from combating drug trafficking to trafficking in cultural goods. Defeating the cancer of drug trafficking is in the interests of peace and stability. We should like to make Italian experience available to the OSCE, promoting greater regional co-operation between border agencies and supporting the training of police forces.

Turning to the economic and environmental dimension, I am convinced that this remains the most fertile ground for very constructive interaction, where less contentious common interests can contribute to spreading a positive atmosphere in more complex environments.

As for the human dimension, the Italian Chairmanship intends to support the link between the protection of fundamental rights and the pursuit of peace, security and prosperity. If fundamental rights are protected through the legal system and in everyday life, the rule of law is affirmed and security guaranteed. If there is no such protection, conflicts multiply and social and political instability continues.

The distinctive feature of our Chairmanship will be dialogue and inclusion, enhancing the role of the autonomous OSCE institutions, civil society, think tanks and universities.

We would like events in the third dimension to be a platform for exchanging experience of security challenges while respecting the principles of the rule of law.

Lastly, the Italian Chairmanship intends to enhance OSCE expertise in cross-cutting themes in all three dimensions. One example is combating trafficking in human beings, which involves combating trafficking networks, protecting victims and strengthening co-operation with the Mediterranean and Asian Partnership countries.

As you are aware, thanks to Italy, the OSCE launched a training project last year to combat human trafficking along migration routes, carried out in co-operation with the Centre of Excellence for Stability Police Units in Vicenza.

The Italian Chairmanship will be ambitious, but realistic. No Chairmanship, however willing and able, can address all of these challenges without relying on the unity of purpose that has underpinned the OSCE's success since 1975. A Chairmanship can assist and facilitate, but it cannot replace the political will of the participating States.

However, I can say for certain that during our Chairmanship year, in continuity with Austria's excellent work, we will not spare any efforts to work every day to revive the most authentic "spirit of Helsinki". We will do everything in complete honesty and transparency to facilitate solutions to the many challenges surrounding us that our generation is called upon to resolve for the common good.

Thank you very much.