

**THIRTY-FIRST MEETING OF THE  
MINISTERIAL COUNCIL****OPENING SESSION (OPEN)**

1. Date: Thursday, 5 December 2024

Opened: 10.25 a.m.  
Closed: 11 a.m.

2. Chairperson: H.E. Dr. Ian Borg, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Tourism of Malta, Chairperson-in-Office of the OSCE

3. Subjects discussed – Statements – Decisions/documents adopted:

Agenda item 1: **FORMAL OPENING**

The Chairperson formally opened the Thirty-First Meeting of the OSCE Ministerial Council.

Agenda item 2: **ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA**

Chairperson

The agenda for the Thirty-First Meeting of the OSCE Ministerial Council was adopted and is annexed hereto (Annex 1).

Agenda item 3: **ADDRESS BY THE OSCE CHAIRPERSON-IN-OFFICE**

H.E. Dr. Ian Borg, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Tourism of Malta, Chairperson-in-Office of the OSCE, addressed the Meeting (MC.DEL/68/24 OSCE+).

Agenda item 4: **ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE OSCE PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY**

H.E. Ms. Pia Kauma, President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, addressed the Meeting.

Agenda item 5: **REPORT BY THE SECRETARIAT**

The Officer-in-Charge/Secretary General of the OSCE, Ms. Catherine Fearon, addressed the Meeting (MC.GAL/9/24/Corr.1).

4. **Next meeting:**

Thursday, 5 December 2024, at 11 a.m., in the plenary hall and via video teleconference

## FIRST PLENARY SESSION (CLOSED)

1. Date: Thursday, 5 December 2024  
Opened: 11.05 a.m.  
Closed: 1.15 p.m.
2. Chairperson: H.E. Dr. Ian Borg, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Tourism of Malta, Chairperson-in-Office of the OSCE  
Mr. Christopher Cutajar, Permanent Secretary at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and Tourism of Malta  
Mr. Neville Aquilina, Director General at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and Tourism of Malta  
Mr. Raphael Lassmann (Malta)
3. Subjects discussed – Statements – Decisions/documents adopted:  
Agenda item 6: STATEMENTS BY HEADS OF DELEGATIONS  
Ukraine (MC.DEL/3/24), Türkiye (MC.DEL/58/24 OSCE+), Russian Federation (MC.DEL/8/24/Corr.1), Hungary-European Union (MC.DEL/26/24), Sweden (MC.DEL/2/24 OSCE+), United States of America (MC.DEL/10/24), Luxembourg, Georgia (MC.DEL/72/24 OSCE+), San Marino, Finland (MC.DEL/45/24 OSCE+), Poland (MC.DEL/55/24 OSCE+), Bulgaria (Annex 2), Germany (MC.DEL/11/24 OSCE+), Liechtenstein (MC.DEL/4/24), Norway (MC.DEL/6/24), Latvia (MC.DEL/62/24 OSCE+), Kazakhstan (MC.DEL/44/24 OSCE+), Slovenia (MC.DEL/42/24 OSCE+), Austria
4. Next meeting:  
Thursday, 5 December 2024, at 3 p.m., in the plenary hall and via video teleconference

## SECOND PLENARY SESSION (CLOSED)

1. Date: Thursday, 5 December 2024  
Opened: 3.15 p.m.  
Closed: 6.45 p.m.
2. Chairperson: H.E. Mr. Zoran Dimitrovski, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade of North Macedonia
3. Subjects discussed – Statements – Decisions/documents adopted:  
Agenda item 6: STATEMENTS BY HEADS OF DELEGATIONS (continued)  
Slovakia (MC.DEL/38/24 OSCE+), Azerbaijan (MC.DEL/53/24 OSCE+),  
Cyprus (MC.DEL/64/24 OSCE+), Netherlands (MC.DEL/12/24 OSCE+),  
Montenegro (MC.DEL/43/24 OSCE+), Armenia (MC.DEL/23/24), Belgium  
(MC.DEL/73/24 OSCE+), Greece (MC.DEL/76/24 OSCE+), Bosnia and  
Herzegovina (MC.DEL/39/24 OSCE+), Andorra (MC.DEL/67/24 OSCE+),  
Monaco (MC.DEL/5/24 OSCE+), Czechia (MC.DEL/50/24 OSCE+),  
Holy See (MC.DEL/7/24 OSCE+), Portugal, Italy, Turkmenistan, Spain  
(MC.DEL/57/24 OSCE+), North Macedonia (MC.DEL/27/24 OSCE+),  
Estonia, Switzerland, Belarus (MC.DEL/9/24 OSCE+), Uzbekistan,  
Kyrgyzstan (MC.DEL/54/24 OSCE+), Tajikistan, Serbia (MC.DEL/49/24  
OSCE+), Denmark (MC.DEL/17/24), United Kingdom, Moldova  
(MC.DEL/74/24 OSCE+), Lithuania (MC.DEL/15/24), Mongolia  
(MC.DEL/51/24 OSCE+), Canada (MC.DEL/70/24), Romania  
(MC.DEL/75/24 OSCE+), Albania (MC.DEL/33/24 OSCE+), France  
(MC.DEL/61/24 OSCE+), Croatia (MC.DEL/14/24 OSCE+), Ireland  
(MC.DEL/47/24), Iceland (MC.DEL/13/24 OSCE+)

4. Next meeting:

Friday, 6 December 2024, at 10 a.m., in the plenary hall and via video teleconference

## THIRD PLENARY SESSION (CLOSED)

1. Date: Friday, 6 December 2024  
  
Opened: 10.15 a.m.  
Suspended: 11.15 a.m.
2. Chairperson: Ambassador Vesa Häkkinen, Permanent Representative of Finland to the OSCE
3. Subjects discussed – Statements – Decisions/documents adopted:  
  
Agenda item 6: STATEMENTS BY HEADS OF DELEGATIONS (continued)  
  
Japan (Partner for Co-operation) (MC.DEL/41/24), Thailand (Partner for Co-operation), Israel (Partner for Co-operation) (MC.DEL/40/24 OSCE+), Jordan (Partner for Co-operation), Afghanistan (Partner for Co-operation), Morocco (Partner for Co-operation) (MC.DEL/16/24), Egypt (Partner for Co-operation) (MC.DEL/60/24 OSCE+), Republic of Korea (Partner for Co-operation), Australia (Partner for Co-operation) (MC.DEL/63/24 OSCE+)
4. Next meeting:  
  
Friday, 6 December 2024, at 12.45 p.m., in the plenary hall and via video teleconference

## THIRD PLENARY SESSION (CONTINUED) (CLOSED)

1. Date: Friday, 6 December 2024  
  
Resumed: 12.45 p.m.  
Closed: 2.40 p.m.
2. Chairperson: H.E. Dr. Ian Borg, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Tourism of Malta, Chairperson-in-Office of the OSCE  
Mr. Christopher Cutajar, Permanent Secretary at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and Tourism of Malta  
Ambassador Natasha Meli Daudey, Permanent Representative of Malta to the OSCE
3. Subjects discussed – Statements – Decisions/documents adopted:  
  
Agenda item 7: ADOPTION OF MINISTERIAL COUNCIL DOCUMENTS AND DECISIONS

### Chairperson

The Chairperson announced that Decision No. 1/24 (MC.DEC/1/24) on the time and place of the next meeting of the OSCE Ministerial Council, the text of which is appended to this journal, had been adopted by the Ministerial Council on 5 June 2024 through a silence procedure.

**Decision:** The Ministerial Council adopted Decision No. 2/24 (MC.DEC/2/24) on the appointment of the OSCE Secretary General, the text of which is appended to this journal.

United States of America (interpretative statement, see attachment 1 to the decision), Canada (also on behalf of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Iceland, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Monaco, Norway, Romania, Sweden and Switzerland) (interpretative statement, see attachment 2 to the decision), Albania (interpretative statement, see attachment 3 to the decision), United Kingdom (interpretative statement, see attachment 4 to the decision), Armenia (interpretative statement, see attachment 5 to the decision)

**Decision:** The Ministerial Council adopted Decision No. 3/24 (MC.DEC/3/24) on the appointment of the Director of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, the text of which is appended to this journal.

United States of America (interpretative statement, see attachment 1 to the decision), Sweden (also on behalf of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Canada, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Iceland, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Monaco, Norway, Romania and Switzerland) (interpretative statement, see attachment 2 to the

decision), United Kingdom (interpretative statement, see attachment 3 to the decision)

**Decision:** The Ministerial Council adopted Decision No. 4/24 (MC.DEC/4/24) on the appointment of the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities, the text of which is appended to this journal.

United States of America (interpretative statement, see attachment 1 to the decision), Denmark (also on behalf of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Canada, Czechia, Estonia, Iceland, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Monaco, Norway, Romania, Sweden and Switzerland) (interpretative statement, see attachment 2 to the decision), United Kingdom (interpretative statement, see attachment 3 to the decision)

**Decision:** The Ministerial Council adopted Decision No. 5/24 (MC.DEC/5/24) on the appointment of the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, the text of which is appended to this journal.

United States of America (interpretative statement, see attachment 1 to the decision), Iceland (also on behalf of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Canada, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Monaco, Norway, Romania, Sweden and Switzerland) (interpretative statement, see attachment 2 to the decision), United Kingdom (interpretative statement, see attachment 3 to the decision)

**Decision:** The Ministerial Council adopted Decision No. 6/24 (MC.DEC/6/24) on the time and place of the next meeting of the OSCE Ministerial Council, the text of which is appended to this journal.

Agenda item 8: CLOSING STATEMENTS BY PARTICIPATING STATES

Hungary–European Union (Annex 3), Ireland (also on behalf of Albania, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Montenegro, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, San Marino, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Ukraine, the United Kingdom and the United States of America) (MC.DEL/21/24), Germany (also on behalf of Albania, Andorra, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Moldova, Monaco, Montenegro, the Netherlands, North Macedonia, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, San Marino, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Ukraine, the United Kingdom and the United States of America) (MC.DEL/35/24), United Kingdom, Russian Federation (MC.DEL/18/24), Canada (Annex 4), Norway (also on behalf of Andorra, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Canada, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Moldova, Monaco, Montenegro, the Netherlands, San Marino, Slovakia, Slovenia, Sweden, Switzerland, Ukraine, the United Kingdom and

the United States of America) (MC.DEL/65/24/Rev.2 OSCE+), United States of America (Annex 5), France (also on behalf of Austria, Albania, Andorra, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Moldova, Montenegro, the Netherlands, North Macedonia, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, San Marino, Slovenia, Sweden, Switzerland, Ukraine, the United Kingdom and the United States of America) (MC.DEL/59/24 OSCE+), Denmark (also on behalf of Albania, Andorra, Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Moldova, Monaco, Montenegro, the Netherlands, North Macedonia, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, San Marino, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Ukraine, the United Kingdom and the United States of America) (Annex 6), Belgium (also on behalf of Albania, Andorra, Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Moldova, Monaco, Montenegro, the Netherlands, North Macedonia, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, San Marino, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Ukraine, the United Kingdom and the United States of America) (MC.DEL/36/24 OSCE+), Russian Federation (also on behalf of Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan) (Annex 7), Kazakhstan (also on behalf of Azerbaijan, Belarus, Hungary, Kyrgyzstan, the Russian Federation, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan) (Annex 8), Belarus (also on behalf of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, the Russian Federation, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan) (Annex 9), Slovakia (also on behalf of Bulgaria, Canada, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Iceland, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Poland, Romania, Sweden, Ukraine, the United Kingdom and the United States of America) (Annex 10), Sweden (also on behalf of Albania, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Montenegro, the Netherlands, North Macedonia, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Türkiye, the United Kingdom and the United States of America) (Annex 11), Azerbaijan (Annex 12), Armenia (Annex 13), Türkiye (Annex 14)

Agenda item 9: ANY OTHER BUSINESS

None

4. Next meeting:

Friday, 6 December 2024, at 2.45 p.m., in the plenary hall and via video teleconference

## CLOSING SESSION (OPEN)

1. Date: Friday, 6 December 2024  
Opened: 2.45 p.m.  
Closed: 3 p.m.
2. Chairperson: H.E. Dr. Ian Borg, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Tourism of Malta, Chairperson-in-Office of the OSCE
3. Subjects discussed – Statements – Decisions/documents adopted:  
Agenda item 10: FORMAL CLOSURE (STATEMENTS BY THE CURRENT AND INCOMING CHAIRPERSONS-IN-OFFICE)  
Chairperson (Malta) (MC.DEL/69/24 OSCE+), Finland (Annex 15)  
The Chairperson formally declared the Thirty-First Meeting of the OSCE Ministerial Council closed.
4. Next meeting:  
4 and 5 December 2025, to be held in Vienna, Austria

**First day of the Thirty-First Meeting  
MC(31) Journal, Agenda item 2****AGENDA FOR  
THE THIRTY-FIRST MEETING OF THE  
OSCE MINISTERIAL COUNCIL**

(Malta, 5 and 6 December 2024)

1. Formal opening
2. Adoption of the agenda
3. Address by the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office
4. Address by the President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly
5. Report by the Secretariat
6. Statements by heads of delegations
7. Adoption of Ministerial Council documents and decisions
8. Closing statements by participating States
9. Any other business
10. Formal closure (statements by the current and incoming Chairpersons-in-Office)

**First day of the Thirty-First Meeting****MC(31) Journal, Agenda item 6****STATEMENT BY  
THE DELEGATION OF BULGARIA**

Mr. Chairperson,  
Distinguished colleagues,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

Bulgaria fully aligns with the statement made by the High Representative on behalf of the European Union.

For the third year in a row, the OSCE Ministerial Council takes place in the shadow of gross violations and blunt denunciation of the fundamental principles of the UN Charter and the OSCE principles and commitments laid down nearly 50 years ago to prevent new wars in Europe. The Russian full-scale invasion of Ukraine has brought the continent to the most challenging times in decades and has exploded the tacit consensus since the end of the Cold War that inter-State war around the globe is a phenomenon of the past.

The UN Charter and the OSCE founding documents have been clear: the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of States must be respected, and borders cannot be changed by force. We have also agreed here in this Organization as a family of sovereign, free and independent States that each and every participating State has the right to determine its own foreign policy and security arrangements.

The resilience and determination of the Ukrainian people to face unyielding hostilities and to defend their homeland from the Russian aggression for more than a thousand days already, are remarkable. Bulgaria will continue to stand firmly by Ukraine and to support its sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence as the country exercises its inherent right to self-defence as enshrined in Article 51 of the UN Charter, including through the possibility of striking any military target involved in operations targeting its territory.

We condemn the persistent attacks on civilian targets, devastation and destruction of critical infrastructure in Ukraine by the Russian Federation, including of substations and energy supplies of the Ukrainian nuclear power plants. The latter not only bring everyday suffering to the civilian population but continue to fuel the reckless Russian roulette game with nuclear safety and security, threatening a much wider region. Those actions must stop immediately. There should be no impunity for any war crimes or violations of international humanitarian law committed during this war.

The regular nuclear arms rhetoric from Moscow threatens to bring the world to the brink of a major war with devastating global impacts. We strongly condemn all the military support that Belarus, the DPRK and Iran are providing to Russia for its aggression that further escalates tensions and has a global destabilizing potential.

Russia's war against Ukraine has changed profoundly the security and economic landscape in the Black Sea region. The escalation of Russia's military activities in the Black Sea, the attacks against Ukraine's ports and other facilities, and the imposed restrictions on freedom of navigation, trade and food supply chains are a matter of particular concern for Bulgaria as a littoral State.

Russia must immediately cease its military actions and unconditionally withdraw all of its forces and military equipment from the entire territory of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders. This war must end with a comprehensive, just and lasting peace based on international law, including the UN Charter and respect for Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity. For achieving this goal, Bulgaria will continue to engage in the efforts to support the implementation of President Zelenskyy's Peace Formula. Our support for Ukraine remains unwavering and will continue through all available OSCE tools and mechanisms, including the OSCE Support Programme for Ukraine but also by channelling Bulgarian development funds with priority to Ukraine.

We reiterate our call on the Russian Federation to release immediately and unconditionally the three illegally detained staff members of the former OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine.

While Europe is facing the most significant security crisis since decades, we should not lose sight of the other conflicts in the OSCE area. They remain a matter of serious concern and possible source of further instability. Bulgaria will continue to support the diplomatic efforts to find working and lasting solutions to the protracted conflicts based on international law, the UN Charter and OSCE principles and commitments.

Colleagues,

Against the backdrop of turbulence and increasing security challenges beyond the OSCE area, it is our responsibility as participating States to work against the dismantling of the security architecture established in Europe through the commitments undertaken in this Organization. But it is our responsibility also to prevent the collapse of the OSCE as a consensus-based co-operative security organization firmly settled on the Helsinki Decalogue with confidence and mutual respect. What is at stake now is not just the OSCE's functionality and ability to perform. The larger stake is to safeguard the enduring value of the OSCE as a forum for dialogue, transparency and confidence-building, a very special owner of a conflict management toolbox. We should not allow the institutional integrity, the operation of the field missions and the financial stability of the Organization to become victims of differences of opinion and be taken hostage to political games.

In this vein, we welcome the agreement on the appointment of the "top four", and congratulate the incumbent Chairmanship for this achievement. We hope the good will and political courage will also prevail to solve the issues with the decisions on the 2026 and 2027

OSCE Chairmanships and the adoption of the Unified Budget. We extend our strong support to Cyprus for their readiness to take over the 2027 OSCE Chairmanship.

In conclusion, I would like to thank the Maltese OSCE Chairmanship for their hospitality and commend them for their leadership of the Organization in hard and very challenging times.

I wish resilience and success to Finland as the incoming Chairmanship, and reassure them of Bulgaria's full support for their efforts to navigate the Organization in the year of a symbolic anniversary for the OSCE.

I thank you.

**Second day of the Thirty-First Meeting**

MC(31) Journal, Agenda item 8

**STATEMENT BY  
THE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE EUROPEAN UNION**

The delegation of Hungary, in its capacity as EU Presidency, passed the floor to the representative of the European Union, who delivered the following statement:

The European Union extends its sincere gratitude to the Maltese Chairperson, Deputy Prime Minister Ian Borg, for the hospitality and the leadership demonstrated during a particularly challenging year. The ongoing illegal, unprovoked and unjustified war of aggression by Russia against Ukraine has tested the Organization's resilience and functionality. We also commend Ambassador Natasha Meli Daudey and her dedicated team in Vienna for their tireless efforts, particularly in fostering consensus on critical issues such as the “top four” appointments, future Chairmanships and the Unified Budget.

We welcome the newly appointed Secretary General and the heads of the three autonomous institutions, and we underscore the shared responsibility of all participating States to maintain the OSCE's effectiveness across all three dimensions of security, firmly rooted in our shared principles and commitments.

Adequate financial resources are essential to achieve this goal. We regret that, despite the tremendous efforts of the Maltese Chairmanship until the eleventh hour, a decision on the 2024 Unified Budget could not be reached.

For the third consecutive year, Russia has failed in its attempts to misuse this forum to justify its war of aggression or deflect its accountability. Groundless claims and false accusations were met with widespread and resolute condemnation. Russia's brutal war represents a flagrant violation of international law, including the UN Charter, as well as OSCE principles and commitments. This war poses the gravest threat to European security. The overwhelming support among participating States for Ukraine's sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders highlights the unwavering and non-negotiable nature of these fundamental principles.

The European Union and its Member States remain steadfast in their commitment to supporting Ukraine and its people. Accountability for all crimes committed in the context of Russia's war of aggression, including the crime of aggression itself, is a priority. We also emphasize the importance of the discussions held during the side event, “In Russia's Captivity: Way to Freedom,” co-sponsored by the European Union. We will continue to

demand the immediate release of all individuals unlawfully detained by Russia, including the three OSCE staff members. Russia must fully comply with its obligations under international humanitarian and human rights law, ensuring humane treatment for all Ukrainian captives.

We recall the European Union's attachment to the normalization of relations between Armenia and Azerbaijan and the signing of a peace agreement.

We reaffirm our commitment to preserving and strengthening the OSCE's tools and mechanisms across all three dimensions of security, grounded in our shared principles. We look forward to supporting Finland as it assumes the Chairmanship and leads the Organization in addressing the current unprecedented challenges to European security.

To conclude, the crisis we face is not due to a flaw in the rules or principles of the European security order, nor is it a failure of the OSCE. Rather, it is the failure of one participating State, actively supported by another, to adhere to these agreed-upon principles. We call on Russia to immediately end its war of aggression against Ukraine and to fully and unconditionally withdraw its forces from Ukraine's internationally recognized territory. A common and indivisible security space can only be achieved when all participating States uphold the universal values, principles and rules to which they have committed.

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

I thank you.

**Second day of the Thirty-First Meeting****MC(31) Journal, Agenda item 8****STATEMENT BY  
THE DELEGATION OF CANADA**

Mr. Chairperson,

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

First, I extend my gratitude to Malta, especially the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Malta's OSCE delegation, for their warm hospitality during this Ministerial Council meeting and the various meetings hosted in your beautiful country over the past year.

I also wish to commend the OSCE staff for their creativity, determination and resilience in upholding the Organization's mandate despite the challenging circumstances.

The OSCE offers a robust set of tools to prevent conflict and enhance security.

The issues we face today are not due to the OSCE's shortcomings but stem from the blatant refusal of some States to adhere to the Helsinki Final Act principles and their OSCE commitments more generally, with Russia's actions in Ukraine being the most egregious example.

To support all OSCE participating States in meeting their commitments, it is essential that the Secretariat, field missions and autonomous institutions – the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, the Representative on Freedom of the Media, and the High Commissioner on National Minorities – be allowed to fulfil their mandates.

No single participating State should be able to block unilaterally the OSCE's budget or other important decisions and, in the process, weaken the OSCE, its autonomous institutions and field missions.

We regret that the consensus principle continues to be abused.

Mr. Chairperson,

Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine shows its rejection of the UN Charter and OSCE commitments. Its attacks on civilians and atrocities in occupied areas reveal a blatant

disregard for human rights and international humanitarian law and its threat of escalation is a rebuttal of its Helsinki Final Act commitments.

Canada stands with Ukraine in its defence of independence, freedom and democracy. We regret that Belarus has been complicit in Russia's actions and in undermining the OSCE from within.

The OSCE, created during a time of division, remains a crucial platform for finding common ground and restoring Euro-Atlantic security.

We look forward to supporting Finland as the Chairmanship in 2025. We are confident that Finland will guide the Organization with integrity, upholding and defending the OSCE's fundamental principles and commitments.

We welcome Cyprus' offer to chair the Organization in 2027.

Canada thanks you, Mr. Chairperson, for the steadfast and principled leadership you have demonstrated, and for the exemplary work of your team.

Thank you.

I would like to request that this statement be attached to the journal of this meeting of the Ministerial Council.

**Second day of the Thirty-First Meeting**

MC(31) Journal, Agenda item 8

**STATEMENT BY  
THE DELEGATION OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA**

This Ministerial Council meeting has focused rightly on the importance of respect for the fundamental principles of this Organization – the very principles Russia blatantly and brutally disregards with its illegal war against Ukraine. As we have done since the beginning of Russia’s war, speaker after speaker at this Ministerial Council meeting has stood with Ukraine in defence of the OSCE’s bedrock principles and against Russia’s aggression. Speaker after speaker has condemned and rejected Russia’s attempts to impede the work of this Organization in order to avoid accountability for its malign actions in pursuit of the Kremlin’s territorial ambitions and designs to control its sovereign neighbours.

To Chairperson-in-Office Borg and your fantastic team led by Ambassador Meli Daudey, thank you for taking on the responsibilities of the Chairmanship in 2024. Your principled leadership has kept the Organization focused on Russia’s war against Ukraine while also advancing the OSCE’s vital work across the region in all three dimensions. You had a daunting agenda and despite some disappointments Malta has done a great service to this Organization with your successes.

First of all, congratulations on bringing us to consensus on the “top four”. We now have four senior leaders appointed for three years. There is still work to do on future Chairmanships. We hope we will get movement on a 2026 OSCE Chairmanship before too long, and we welcome and fully support Cyprus’ bid to chair the OSCE in 2027.

Mr. Chairperson, it is deeply regrettable that the lack of a Unified Budget since 2021 has forced the OSCE – in particular the field missions – to maintain operations day-to-day and respond to urgent needs without predictable resources that enable effective planning. We urge all participating States to negotiate in good faith on the Finnish Chairmanship’s proposed 2025 Unified Budget, and as others have noted, there might still be a chance for 2024. At present, unfortunately, lack of good faith on the part of one participating State has prevented agreement in Malta, and has contributed to the non-functioning of our Organization.

To Finland, you have the United States’ full support for what we are confident will be a consequential Chairmanship marking 50 years of the Helsinki Final Act. We know that you will take this Organization forward, confident in the continuing relevance of its founding

principles which will guide our work as we tackle ongoing challenges in all three dimensions and new ones the future is sure to bring.

Mr. Chairperson, many times during the Helsinki Final Act's 50 years, my country and other participating States have rallied to the defence of its core principles whenever they were under siege. Our collective resolve in defence of the Helsinki principles has given the OSCE important political and moral weight to channel change peacefully when historic opportunities have opened.

The need for the OSCE never has been more acute. We need the OSCE's capacity, its flexibility, its platform for dialogue, and its credibility to work with governments and civil society from North America to Europe and Central Asia in building peace, creating conditions for prosperity, advancing democratic governance and promoting respect for human rights. Together, we must strengthen the resilience of this unique Organization so that it will continue the work that no other international organization is positioned to attempt.

As we look to the future, we should sharpen our focus on the politico-military and economic and environmental dimensions and on issues like border security and transnational threats, as well as hybrid concerns.

Looking to the future, we should all aim to sustain our assistance to Ukraine. The OSCE and its Support Programme for Ukraine can play a key role in responding to the problems caused by Russia's war and fostering reforms that will help Ukraine along its chosen democratic path and toward integration into the Euro-Atlantic community. Beyond Russia's abuses and atrocities against the people of Ukraine, we also must continue to address the challenges for democracy and human rights elsewhere in the OSCE area, such as the proliferation of undemocratic laws that restrict civil society and independent media, and the continuing unjust detentions of individuals in multiple countries just for, as the Helsinki Final Act puts it, "knowing and acting upon their rights."

Progress between Armenia and Azerbaijan in negotiations means a peaceful and prosperous South Caucasus is in closer reach than ever. The OSCE must be ready to support good faith, participating State-driven efforts to build mutual trust in the region. We encourage the parties to seize this historic opportunity and not let disagreements outside the scope of an agreement slow this move toward peace. A binding peace agreement is the strongest guarantee for the region's future and should be signed as soon as possible.

We see emerging opportunities for greater co-operation with Central Asian States, particularly on second dimension priorities, including water security.

The Helsinki Final Act at 50 is an opportunity to increase the visibility of the OSCE field missions. Every day, the missions' work helps to defuse tension, improve governance, and promote human rights and fundamental freedoms. They need to be adequately resourced.

We can deepen co-operation with the OSCE's Partners for Co-operation, including partners in the Indo-Pacific. As Russia's growing reliance on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has demonstrated, developments in the Indo-Pacific region directly affect the OSCE area – and vice versa. The OSCE's partnerships for co-operation will be crucial to addressing these and other shared and interconnected security challenges.

And we will continue to value the essential role and substantial contributions of civil society in promoting implementation of the rich body of commitments that all participating States have made. We appreciate the recommendations put forward at the parallel civil society event earlier this week. We look forward to discussing ways to further strengthen civil society engagement with the OSCE.

The United States remains dedicated to the OSCE and advancing our shared goal of a secure, peaceful and prosperous region where the human rights and dignity of all are respected. We are ready and willing to partner with all those who share that goal. Let us all support this Organization and the incoming Finnish Chairmanship-in-Office so that the 50th anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act testifies to our powers of innovation as well as our passion for freedom.

**Second day of the Thirty-First Meeting****MC(31) Journal, Agenda item 8**

**STATEMENT BY  
THE DELEGATION OF DENMARK  
(ALSO ON BEHALF OF ALBANIA, ANDORRA,  
AUSTRIA, BELGIUM, BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA, BULGARIA,  
CANADA, CROATIA, CYPRUS, CZECHIA, ESTONIA, FINLAND,  
FRANCE, GEORGIA, GERMANY, GREECE, HUNGARY, ICELAND,  
IRELAND, ITALY, LATVIA, LIECHTENSTEIN, LITHUANIA,  
LUXEMBOURG, MALTA, MOLDOVA, MONACO, MONTENEGRO,  
THE NETHERLANDS, NORTH MACEDONIA, NORWAY, POLAND,  
PORTUGAL, ROMANIA, SAN MARINO, SLOVAKIA, SLOVENIA,  
SPAIN, SWEDEN, SWITZERLAND, UKRAINE, THE UNITED  
KINGDOM AND THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA)**

I have the honour to make this statement on behalf of the following 44 participating States: Albania, Andorra, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Canada, the EU and its Member States, Georgia, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Moldova, Monaco, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Norway, San Marino, Switzerland, Ukraine, the United Kingdom, the United States of America and my own country, Denmark.

Mr. Chairperson,

In December 2023, as we marked the 75th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and this year, as we mark the 75th anniversary of the Geneva Conventions, we are reminded of how nations came together in the wake of the Second World War to build a framework to ensure future peace and security so that the horrors of that war were never repeated. These seminal documents underscored the need to protect the inherent dignity and rights of all individuals, in peace and in war.

In the decades that followed, we saw progress on strengthening human rights protections. In the 1975 Helsinki Final Act, we further acknowledged that ensuring respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms is a prerequisite for lasting security and peace among and within States.

The OSCE's comprehensive approach to security, with human rights, democracy and the rule of law at its core, is our shared commitment. Yet, in recent years, actions taken by the

governments of some participating States – whether against fellow participating States or against their own people – have challenged these hard-won achievements, undermining the very progress we have collectively worked for, for so long.

Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, enabled by the Lukashenka regime in Belarus, and other third countries, remains the starker example, reminding us all that human rights and fundamental freedoms are among the primary targets of an aggressor. We are gravely concerned by the findings of the 2024 OSCE Moscow Mechanism report regarding the arbitrary deprivation of liberty of Ukrainian civilians by the Russian Federation. The report detailed allegations of "widespread and systematic" violations by the Russian authorities and concluded that there are reasonable grounds to believe that war crimes and crimes against humanity have been committed. The UN Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Ukraine has also concluded that it has sufficient evidence to determine that Russian authorities have acted pursuant to a co-ordinated State policy and have therefore committed crimes against humanity of torture. These reports add to the ever growing evidence of Russia's systemic disregard for human rights and international humanitarian law.

We also remain deeply concerned by the Kremlin's operations to forcibly transfer Ukrainian children within Russian-occupied parts of Ukraine and/or deport them to Russia. Children have been subjected to pro-Russian indoctrination and in some cases adopted by Russian families. The May 2023 Moscow Mechanism expert report concluded that this practice may amount to a crime against humanity.

We strongly condemn all violations and abuses of human rights and violations of international humanitarian law. All alleged violations of international humanitarian and human rights law, war crimes, and crimes against humanity must be duly and thoroughly investigated and those responsible held to account, including for the crime of aggression against Ukraine. All civilian detainees must be released immediately and all forcibly transferred or deported children must be returned safely to Ukraine, or to a third location, taking into account the best interests of the child.

We are also concerned that the human rights situation within Russia has deteriorated further despite the recommendations of the 2022 Moscow Mechanism report, which clearly demonstrated the link between Russia's domestic repression and its threats to international peace and security.

Meanwhile, in Belarus, while acknowledging the release of some political prisoners, the regime's harsh repression of those advocating for peaceful democratic change remains ongoing, with an estimated nearly 1,300 political prisoners and credible reports of large-scale torture and other mistreatment, including incommunicado detention.

Mr. Chairperson,

The foundations of freedom, equality and justice are under pressure across the OSCE area. An alarming rise in violence against persons based on their religion or belief, as well as overall intolerance and discrimination including anti-Semitism and anti-Muslim bigotry are limiting the full and equal participation and security of all people in our societies.

Civil society is an indispensable part of our countries' conscience and an important partner in advancing the values and work of this Organization. Therefore, it is with deep regret that we observe a shrinking civic space within many OSCE participating States, including through the use of so-called foreign agent legislation or "sovereignty protection" measures. Authorities of a number of participating States beyond Russia and Belarus threaten and arbitrarily arrest and detain peaceful protesters, human rights defenders, political opponents, and journalists and media actors. We pay tribute to the individuals and civil society organizations that work tirelessly, often at great personal risk to their livelihoods and even their lives, to defend our shared dedication to democracy, rule of law, human rights and fundamental freedoms.

To that end, we highly value the Human Dimension Implementation Meeting as an important platform for participating States and civil society to assess the implementation of OSCE commitments in the human dimension and discuss how to improve it. While the Warsaw Human Dimension Conference has proved itself a valuable alternative, the ongoing obstruction of the Human Dimension Implementation Meeting is unacceptable. We emphasize the necessity of holding it next year as mandated and we will support the 2025 Chairmanship in these efforts. Further, we commend the OSCE autonomous institutions for their vital role in promoting the implementation of OSCE human dimension commitments by participating States. Their autonomy and dedication are indispensable for advancing democracy, the respect for human rights, and the rule of law.

Recognition that respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms is integral to comprehensive security is enshrined in the Decalogue of the Helsinki Final Act. We will continue to speak out when democratic principles, human rights and fundamental freedoms are violated or abused: whether it is human rights defenders, journalists and media actors facing reprisals, including imprisonment, for their brave work, or violent crackdowns on peaceful protesters aspiring for democratic change. We will continue to fight for women's and girls' full enjoyment of human rights and to promote gender equality. We will press for the release of all those arbitrarily detained or imprisoned for knowing and acting upon their human rights. We will keep pressing for the eradication of torture, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment and other ill treatment. We will continue to support free and fair elections. We will promote tolerance and non-discrimination and condemn, investigate, and prosecute hate crimes, including online. We will continue to demand accountability for the crimes committed. We will challenge stereotypes and prejudice, combat myths and disinformation with facts, and promote a world where no individual is left behind or targeted for who they are, for whom they love, for what they look like, or for what they say, believe or do not believe.

All participating States have categorically declared that commitments in the human dimension are matters of direct and legitimate concern to all participating States and do not belong exclusively to the internal affairs of the State concerned. We will continue to work for the implementation of OSCE principles and commitments.

In closing, we thank the OSCE Chairmanship and the Chairperson of the Human Dimension Committee as well as the autonomous institutions for their tireless work to strengthen the human dimension in these challenging times.

Thank you.

**Second day of the Thirty-First Meeting  
MC(31) Journal, Agenda item 8****STATEMENT BY  
THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION  
(ALSO ON BEHALF OF BELARUS, KAZAKHSTAN,  
KYRGYZSTAN, TAJIKISTAN AND UZBEKISTAN)**

We, a group of OSCE participating States,

Are deeply concerned about the growing threat of terrorism and are aware that there are a number of internal and external factors that contribute to the serious problem of radicalization, which breeds violence and promotes involvement in terrorist and extremist activities;

Offer our sincere condolences to the families of the victims and to the peoples and governments affected by terrorist acts in the OSCE area and beyond;

Uequivocally condemn terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, recognizing that any acts of terrorism are criminal and unjustifiable regardless of their motivations, whenever and by whomsoever committed;

Express great alarm at the growing number of terrorist and other extremist acts that pose a threat to society and the State, which are committed under the influence of radical ideas, including on the grounds of xenophobia, racism and other forms of intolerance or in the name of religion or belief, while stressing that terrorism and extremism cannot and should not be associated with any religion, nationality, civilization or ethnic group;

Oppose double standards in the fight against terrorism and extremism, as well as attempts to use terrorist and extremist groups for self-serving purposes;

Reaffirm our unwavering determination to remain united in the international fight against terrorism and to work together to prevent and suppress terrorist acts, and also to address the conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism and extremism by strengthening co-operation, fully respecting the central and co-ordinating role of the United Nations, complying with the relevant obligations under international law, including the Charter of the United Nations and relevant international conventions and protocols, implementing the

relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions and implementing in a balanced manner the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy;

Acknowledge that States should play a leading role in countering terrorist and extremist threats and, in this regard, emphasize the importance of developing regional and international co-operation to strengthen the relevant capacities of State institutions, recognizing that this should take into account, first and foremost, States' experience and priorities and the national context in view of the various legal, political, socio-economic, cultural, religious and other local specificities;

Consider it necessary to step up States' individual and collective efforts to counter radicalization that leads to terrorism and extremism motivated by terrorist ideas and other radical ideologies, including religious intolerance, xenophobia, aggressive nationalism and ethnic and racial discrimination, which promote incitement to terrorism and recruitment for terrorist activities;

Also call for the implementation of comprehensive measures to counter the financing of terrorism and other forms of support for terrorist activities, including by suppressing recruitment, weapons supply channels and the cross-border movement of terrorists;

Believe it is necessary to continue to enhance advanced methods and tools for combating terrorism, in particular to stop attempts by terrorists and extremists to use modern information and communication technologies, including the Internet, to disseminate their radical ideology and practices;

Emphasize the importance of eliminating the causes of and conditions for the emergence and spread of radicalism, primarily among young people, of involving the education system, the media, civil society, religious leaders, academic structures and the business community in the various preventive measures and outreach undertaken by States in order to raise awareness of the danger of the ideologies and activities of terrorist and extremist organizations, and of advancing the principles of tolerance, social cohesion and respect for ethnic, religious and cultural diversity;

Note the particular relevance of the efforts to deradicalize and socially reintegrate individuals who have been influenced by radical ideology, including those previously involved in the illegal activities of terrorist and extremist organizations, those held in detention facilities for committing crimes of an extremist or terrorist nature, and those who have served their sentences for engaging in terrorism and extremism, including so-called foreign terrorist fighters;

Call upon the OSCE executive structures, within their existing mandates, to actively promote the development of co-operation through an inclusive regional dialogue on preventing and combating terrorism with the involvement of all participating States and interested Partners for Co-operation by encouraging the exchange of national experiences and best practices in this area, and to assist participating States (if necessary and upon their request) in implementing their relevant international obligations, while also taking into account their national priorities and legal, political, socio-economic, cultural, religious and other local specificities;

Call upon all OSCE participating States to discuss and possibly develop common measures to counter terrorist and extremist threats on the basis of the relevant collective commitments, including those adopted within the OSCE.

I kindly ask you, Mr. Chairperson, to attach this statement to the journal of this meeting of the Ministerial Council.

Thank you.

**Second day of the Thirty-First Meeting  
MC(31) Journal, Agenda item 8**

**STATEMENT BY  
THE DELEGATION OF KAZAKHSTAN  
(ALSO ON BEHALF OF AZERBAIJAN, BELARUS, HUNGARY,  
KYRGYZSTAN, THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,  
TAJIKISTAN AND UZBEKISTAN)**

We, a group of OSCE participating States,

Reaffirm our commitment to respecting human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the freedom of thought, conscience, religion or belief, for all without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion, as stipulated in the 1975 Helsinki Final Act and in the relevant OSCE commitments in the field of tolerance and non-discrimination;

Strongly condemn all manifestations of discrimination, violence and terrorist acts against Christians, Muslims and members of other religions. Note that acts of terror committed by individuals or groups identifying themselves with a particular religion or belief can never justify intolerance towards people on the basis of their religion. Categorically reject the equation of terrorism and violent extremism with any religion;

Express serious concern at the increasing number of incidents targeting Christians and Muslims in the OSCE area and in neighbouring regions, including acts of intolerance, discrimination, prejudice, violence and hate crime, which pose a challenge to our stability and security and to the very existence of Christian and Muslim communities, their holy sites and places of worship;

Also express deep concern at the continuing acts of intolerance, violence and terrorism against people on the basis of religion or belief, including against members of other religions;

Commemorate the tenth anniversary of the adoption at the OSCE Ministerial Council in Basel in 2014 of the Declaration on Enhancing Efforts to Combat Anti-Semitism (MC.DOC/8/14) and emphasize in this regard the pressing need to accomplish the urgent task contained therein to elaborate declarations on enhancing efforts to combat intolerance and discrimination against Christians, Muslims and members of other religions;

Call upon political leaders and public figures in OSCE participating States to speak out against hate-motivated incidents and crimes committed against Christians, Muslims and members of other religions on the basis of their religion, to promote relevant educational programmes and to take steps to effectively counter manifestations in the OSCE area of intolerance and discrimination against Christians and Muslims and members of other religions on the basis of their religion or beliefs.

I kindly ask you, Mr. Chairperson, to attach this statement to the journal of this meeting of the Ministerial Council.

Thank you.

**Second day of the Thirty-First Meeting  
MC(31) Journal, Agenda item 8****STATEMENT BY  
THE DELEGATION OF BELARUS  
(ALSO ON BEHALF OF KAZAKHSTAN, KYRGYZSTAN, THE  
RUSSIAN FEDERATION, TAJIKISTAN AND UZBEKISTAN)**

We, a group of OSCE participating States,

Express our deep conviction that the cultural heritage of each of us represents an integral part of our civilization, memory and shared history that must be passed on to future generations;

Reaffirm the importance of the complete and lasting documentation of sites, structures, cultural landscapes, objects and cultural systems, including historical, religious and cultural monuments, as they presently exist;

Express deep concern at the increasing number of deliberate attempts at, and incidents involving, the desecration or destruction of monuments erected in honour of those who fought against Nazism during the Second World War, which are a consequence of the failure to implement the relevant OSCE commitments, including the 1991 Document of the Cracow Symposium on the Cultural Heritage of the CSCE Participating States, and a violation of the relevant bilateral agreements, and urge respect for, unimpeded access to and prevention of the vandalism and destruction of memorials and graves, regardless of their location;

Express our concern at the shameful actions connected with the glorification of Nazism, including the spraying of graffiti with pro-Nazi content, particularly on monuments to the victims of the Second World War;

Welcome the efforts of participating States to preserve the historical truth, including through the construction and preservation of monuments and memorials to those who fought in the ranks of the anti-Hitler coalition;

Call upon the OSCE participating States that have not yet done so to take appropriate measures, including in the educational sphere, to counter the distortion of history and the outcome of the Second World War and to accurately reflect those tragic pages in history, first

and foremost the suffering of millions of people as a result of the spread of the misanthropic ideology of Nazism and fascism;

In this regard, we welcome the United Nations General Assembly resolution on combating glorification of Nazism, neo-Nazism and other practices that contribute to fuelling contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, which is a testament to the international community's resolve not to repeat the tragic mistakes of the past and to build the future on the basis of unifying principles.

I kindly ask you, Mr. Chairperson, to attach this statement to the journal of this meeting of the Ministerial Council.

Thank you.

**Second day of the Thirty-First Meeting****MC(31) Journal, Agenda item 8**

**STATEMENT BY  
THE DELEGATION OF SLOVAKIA  
(ALSO ON BEHALF OF BULGARIA, CANADA, CZECHIA,  
DENMARK, ESTONIA, FINLAND, ICELAND, IRELAND, LATVIA,  
LITHUANIA, NORWAY, POLAND, ROMANIA, SWEDEN,  
UKRAINE, THE UNITED KINGDOM AND THE  
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA)**

This statement is delivered on behalf of Bulgaria, Canada, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Iceland, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Sweden, Ukraine, the United Kingdom and the United States of America.

We reaffirm our full support for Georgia's sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders.

Sixteen years since the Russian Federation's military invasion of Georgia, we remain deeply concerned over the continued occupation of Georgia's regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia and underline the need for peaceful resolution of the conflict based on full respect for international law and commitments, including the UN Charter and the Helsinki Final Act.

We condemn Russia's military aggression against Georgia in 2008 in blatant violation of international law and express our concern that Georgia has been a target of Russia's hybrid tactics as well as conventional warfare ever since regaining its independence. We express our deep concern over Russia's ongoing illegal military presence, military exercises and violation of airspace in Georgia's Abkhazia and South Ossetia regions. In this regard, we express deep concern over the steps taken to establish a Russian naval base in the Ochamchire district of the occupied Abkhazia region as another provocative attempt to destabilize the already dire situation on the ground and in the wider Black Sea region. We also reiterate our condemnation of Russia's continued war of aggression against Ukraine.

We welcome Georgia's compliance with the EU-mediated 12 August 2008 ceasefire agreement. We call upon Russia to fulfil immediately its clear obligation under the ceasefire agreement to withdraw its forces to pre-conflict positions, as well as its commitments to allow unfettered access for the delivery of humanitarian assistance and not to impede the creation of international security arrangements on the ground. We call upon Russia to reverse its recognition of the so-called independence of Georgia's regions of Abkhazia and South

Ossetia and to ensure the safe and dignified return of all internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees to their homes in a manner consistent with international law.

We condemn the steps aiming to incorporate Georgia's regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia into Russia's political, military, social, economic, judicial and other spheres, including attempts at implementation of the so-called integration and alliance treaties between Russia and Georgia's Abkhazia and South Ossetia regions, which constitute a clear violation of international law by the Russian Federation and directly contradict OSCE commitments. We further condemn transferring Sokhumi airport to Russia for reconstruction and operation, the illegitimate establishment of polling stations for Russian presidential elections in the Abkhazia and South Ossetia regions of Georgia in March 2024, and the so-called parliamentary elections in the South Ossetia region of Georgia in June 2024 without Georgia's consent. We are concerned over Russia's hampering of the activities of international organizations operating on the ground and restricting the confidence-building efforts. We urge Russia to reverse its steps to incorporate Georgia's regions into its own government structures.

We are concerned over the continuous discrimination against Georgians on the grounds of ethnicity in Georgia's regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. We are also concerned about abuses, including severe restrictions on rights related to freedom of movement, education, residence and property, particularly in connection with the destruction of the houses of IDPs. We condemn the restriction of education in the native Georgian language and its replacement with Russian in schools and kindergartens in Georgia's regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. We also condemn the obliteration and alteration of Georgian features of the Georgian cultural heritage monuments in both occupied regions.

We are particularly concerned over the ongoing installation of barbed wire fences and other artificial barriers along the administrative boundary lines and the lengthy closure of so-called crossing points, which have led to severe humanitarian consequences for the local population. We also condemn the unexpected closure of so-called crossing points of administrative boundary lines during the period around Georgia's 26 October parliamentary elections preventing Georgian citizens from casting their votes and disrupting commerce and freedom of movement for the affected population. The partial and temporary reopening of the so-called crossing points cannot be viewed as satisfactory. All so-called crossing points in Georgia's regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia must be reopened for all Georgian citizens residing on both sides of the administrative boundary lines.

Isolation and continuous restrictions on freedom of movement have further destabilized the situation on the ground and severely impacted the security, safety, well-being and humanitarian conditions of civilians in conflict-affected areas, preventing their access to family, property, agricultural lands, religious sites and cemeteries as well as Georgian government-issued pensions and the free healthcare services and education available in Georgian government-controlled territory. This creates a risk for further depopulation of both regions.

We condemn the killings of ethnic Georgian citizens Davit Basharuli, Giga Otkhozoria, Archil Taturashvili, Tamaz Ginturi and Vitali Karbaia, and express concern for the death of Irakli Kvaratskhelia in illegal detention at the Russian military base in the Abkhazia region. We urge Russia to remove any obstacles to bringing the perpetrators to

justice. In this context, we reiterate our support for Georgia's preventive steps aimed at eradicating impunity and note the Otkhozoria-Tatunashvili List adopted by the Government of Georgia.

We remain deeply concerned by ongoing arbitrary detentions around the administrative boundary lines involving vulnerable groups, and in some cases people with severe health problems. We call for the immediate and unconditional release of Irakli Bebua, Kristine Takalandze, Giorgi Mosiashvili, and all those under arbitrary detention.

We note the January 2021 judgment of the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) in the case concerning the armed conflict between the Russian Federation and Georgia in August 2008 and its consequences, including its findings that Russia exercised effective control over Georgia's regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia following the 12 August 2008 ceasefire agreement, including through its military presence. The Court also ruled that Russia, in violation of the European Convention on Human Rights: tortured Georgian prisoners of war; arbitrarily detained and killed Georgian civilians; was responsible for their inhumane and degrading treatment; and prevented the return of ethnic Georgians to their homes. Moreover, the European Court of Human Rights adopted another judgment in the case "Mamasakhlisi and Others v. Georgia and Russia" on 7 March 2023, which confirmed the effective control of the Russian Federation over the Abkhazia region of Georgia even before Russia's war against Georgia in August 2008, and its full responsibility for human rights violations in the occupied region. We recall the decision of the ECHR of 28 April 2023, which ordered the Russian Federation to pay up to 130 million euros in favour of conflict-affected Georgian citizens. We note the two ECHR judgments of 19 December 2023 – one defining the responsibility of Russia for the killing of Georgian citizen Giga Otkhozoria, and the other affirming Russia's responsibility for the illegal detentions of Georgian citizens in the Abkhazia region of Georgia. In its latest ruling on 9 April 2024, the ECHR confirmed multiple violations of the European Convention on Human Rights caused by unlawful "borderization" by the Russian Federation. We call on the Russian Federation to fully comply with these judgments, including by allowing IDPs to return to their homes in safety and dignity.

We also note the decision of the International Criminal Court (ICC) of 2022 that issued arrest warrants for war crimes committed against ethnic Georgian civilians during Russia's invasion in 2008 and noted the alleged role of a now deceased Russian military official uncovered by the investigation. We call on Russia to co-operate with the ICC.

We support the effective functioning of the Geneva International Discussions as the only format of negotiations between Georgia and the Russian Federation to address implementation of the EU-mediated 12 August 2008 ceasefire agreement, as well as the security, human rights, and humanitarian challenges stemming from Russia's invasion of Georgia in August 2008. We underline the necessity of progress on the core issues of the discussions, including withdrawal of Russian forces and the establishment of international security arrangements in Georgia's regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia as stipulated in the ceasefire agreement, and on ensuring the safe, dignified and voluntary return of IDPs and refugees in accordance with international law. We regret the permanent disruption of the Geneva International Discussions rounds due to walk-outs by participants from Russia and its *de facto* authorities at the agenda item on IDPs and refugees. We strongly support applying

the women, peace and security agenda in the Geneva International Discussions in order to facilitate inclusive and sustainable peace and security on the ground.

We express our support for the Incident Prevention and Response Mechanisms (IPRMs) in Ergneti and Gali and emphasize the important role they can have in preventing any escalation and in helping to protect the safety and security of people on the ground. We express our great concern over the lengthy suspension of the Gali IPRM and urge its resumption without further delay or preconditions, in line with the ground rules.

We reaffirm our unwavering support for the EU Monitoring Mission (EUMM) and call upon Russia to allow the EUMM to implement its mandate in full, including by enabling the EUMM's access on both sides of the administrative boundary lines. We condemn the recent incident in which Russian forces temporarily held the EUMM monitors in Georgian government-controlled territory while the monitors were fulfilling their duties. At the same time, we call on Russia to enable full and unhindered access by international human rights organizations to Georgia's regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia.

We support the comprehensive de-occupation and peaceful conflict resolution policy of the Government of Georgia. We support the Georgian Government's "A Step to a Better Future" initiative and its "Peace Fund for a Better Future", aimed at improving the humanitarian and socio-economic conditions of people residing in Georgia's regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia and at fostering confidence-building among divided communities and stand ready to support.

We encourage the OSCE's engagement in the process of finding a peaceful resolution to the Russia-Georgia conflict. We regret the closure of the OSCE Mission to Georgia in 2009 and encourage the OSCE participating States to decide on the reopening of the OSCE cross-dimensional mission in Georgia, including a monitoring capacity able to operate unhindered across the administrative boundary lines. The reopening of the mission would strengthen considerably the OSCE's engagement in the Geneva International Discussions and IPRMs. Furthermore, the re-establishment of a field mission would support the OSCE's work in every phase of the conflict cycle.

The Group of Friends of Georgia will continue to raise awareness of the conflict and of developments on the ground, hold Russia accountable for meeting its obligations and commitments, and advocate for the conflict's peaceful resolution.

**Second day of the Thirty-First Meeting****MC(31) Journal, Agenda item 8**

**STATEMENT BY  
THE DELEGATION OF SWEDEN  
(ALSO OF BEHALF OF ALBANIA, BELGIUM,  
BULGARIA, CANADA, CROATIA, CZECHIA, DENMARK,  
ESTONIA, FINLAND, FRANCE, GERMANY, GREECE, HUNGARY,  
ICELAND, ITALY, LATVIA, LITHUANIA, LUXEMBOURG,  
MONTENEGRO, THE NETHERLANDS, NORTH MACEDONIA,  
NORWAY, POLAND, PORTUGAL, ROMANIA, SLOVAKIA,  
SLOVENIA, SPAIN, TÜRKİYE, THE UNITED KINGDOM  
AND THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA)**

Mr. Chairperson,

This statement is delivered on behalf of the NATO Allies.

Russia's illegal, unjustifiable and unprovoked war of aggression against Ukraine has shattered peace and stability in the OSCE area. It is a blatant violation of international law including the UN Charter and contravenes OSCE principles and commitments. We also remain concerned about the challenging security situations in the OSCE area and beyond.

We reaffirm our unwavering commitment to a free, democratic, independent and sovereign Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders. We fully support its right to self-defence and to choose its own security arrangements, as enshrined in international law, the Helsinki Final Act, the Charter of Paris and the Istanbul Charter for European Security. As Ukraine continues its vital work on democratic, economic and security reforms we will continue to support Ukraine on its irreversible path to full Euro-Atlantic integration, including NATO membership.

There can be no impunity for abuses of human rights, war crimes and other violations of international law. Russia bears responsibility for the deaths of thousands and for extensive damage to civilian infrastructure in Ukraine. Russia's war has also profoundly jeopardized nuclear safety and food security.

We urge all countries not to provide any kind of assistance to Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine. We condemn all acts, such as by Belarus, the DPRK and Iran,

facilitating, or supporting and thereby prolonging this war. We call on the PRC to cease all material and political support to Russia's war effort.

Russia remains the most significant and direct threat to our peace, security and stability. Russia seeks to establish so-called “spheres of influence” and direct control through coercion, subversion, disinformation, aggression and illegal attempted annexations. Russia is rebuilding and expanding its military capabilities and continues its airspace violations and provocative activities. We stand in solidarity with all Allies affected by these actions. Russia's military build-up including in the Baltic, Black Sea and Mediterranean Sea regions and the High North challenges our security. Russia's posture, intensified hybrid actions, including through proxies, and its use of force violate the rules-based international order. We condemn Russia's behaviour, and we call on Russia to uphold its international obligations.

We condemn Russia's irresponsible nuclear rhetoric and coercive nuclear signalling, including its announced stationing of nuclear weapons in Belarus, which demonstrate a posture of strategic intimidation.

Russia has instigated conflicts in the OSCE area and inhibited efforts to resolve them. We call on Russia to withdraw all of its forces and equipment from the Republic of Moldova and Georgia, stationed there without their consent. We firmly support their sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity within their internationally recognized borders. We remain committed to supporting our partners to counter malign influence and aggression.

We reject Russia's claims that NATO is escalating tensions. NATO is a defensive Alliance. We remain willing to maintain channels of communication with Moscow, including in the OSCE, to manage and mitigate risk, prevent escalation and build trust and confidence, based on key principles of transparency, compliance, verification, reciprocity and host nation consent. We remain united in our commitment to effective arms control as a key element of the security in the OSCE area, taking into account the prevailing security environment and the security of all Allies. Allies continue to enhance NATO's deterrence and defence against all threats and challenges.

Russia continues to demonstrate disregard for arms control. Russia has violated and withdrawn from long-standing obligations and commitments, thereby weakening the global arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation architecture.

Ahead of the Helsinki Final Act's 50th anniversary, we reiterate the key importance of the OSCE as a unique forum for dialogue, for advancing comprehensive security and for political accountability. We will continue to support the OSCE's work across all three dimensions, and advocate for its effective and unimpeded functioning, including the autonomous institutions and field presences.

Russia must immediately stop its war of aggression against Ukraine and completely and unconditionally withdraw all of its forces. We welcome and support Ukraine's continuous commitment to advance a comprehensive, just and lasting peace through President Zelensky's Peace Formula and the Peace Summit process.

The participating States subscribing to this statement request its attachment to the journal of this Ministerial Council meeting.

**Second day of the Thirty-First Meeting****MC(31) Journal, Agenda item 8****STATEMENT BY  
THE DELEGATION OF AZERBAIJAN**

Madam Chairperson,

The delegation of Azerbaijan welcomes the adoption of the decisions on the appointment of the leadership of the “top four” positions, which will contribute to strengthening the functioning of this Organization at a critical time.

At the same time, we express our regret that it was not possible to adopt the decision on the approval of the 2024 Unified Budget.

In this regard, we would like to state for the record that we support the early adoption of the Unified Budget.

We proceed from the understanding that the Organization’s scarce resources must be allocated where they are needed the most, to fund the programmatic activities that are relevant and around which there is consensus. This would ensure the proper functioning of the Organization in an efficient, transparent and accountable manner and would allow the OSCE to deliver and to offer added value.

For this purpose, obsolete, dysfunctional and irrelevant OSCE structures such as those related to the former Minsk Process must be removed from the budget.

We regret that the budget proposal for 2024 falls short of this objective and was designed with serious inconsistencies with the OSCE Unified Budget process as envisaged in the OSCE Financial Regulations and relevant decisions.

However, in a spirit of compromise, the delegation of Azerbaijan was ready to consider joining consensus on this particular proposal on the basis of the understanding that the present draft decision includes significant reductions of the above-mentioned funds as a first phase in the process of their discontinuation, which will be reflected in a declaration of the Chairmanship supported in identical statements from incoming Chairmanships and other participating States individually or collectively.

We regret that this proposal was not acceptable to some participating States, which made the adoption of the decision impossible.

While we express our disappointment with this situation, the delegation of Azerbaijan urges the Secretariat and the incoming Finnish Chairmanship within the 2025 Unified Budget process to prioritize the work of the OSCE across the three dimensions in those areas where it has a comparative advantage, and to this end, to continue consultations and to expeditiously prepare a plan that defines the main parameters and determines the tasks, timelines and administrative arrangements enabling the closure of the structures related to the dysfunctional Minsk Process.

This will ensure the collective support of all participating States for the timely adoption of the Unified Budget, will restore the functionality of the Organization and will put the financing of the Organization on a sustainable path.

We are ready to engage constructively in the budget discussions.

Thank you.

**Second day of the Thirty-First Meeting****MC(31) Journal, Agenda item 8****STATEMENT BY  
THE DELEGATION OF ARMENIA**

Madam Chairperson,

We believe that the OSCE as the largest security Organization still has the potential to deliver on its core mandate and against this backdrop Armenia will continue to be guided by the urgency of upholding and preserving our Organization's functionality, integrity and the ability to continue its mandated work based on our common principles.

Madam Chairperson,

It would not be an exaggeration to state that the recent discussions on the adoption of the Unified Budget of the OSCE occurred under unprecedeted and highly challenging circumstances, where the Organization's future, its proper functioning, and its operations have been largely at stake.

These circumstances placed an enormous burden on participating States. Armenia was no exception.

We supported the draft decision on the 2024 Unified Budget as it was tabled. We did our best to contribute to this end by adopting a highly constructive approach and making significant compromises. This has been the reflection of our political will and we regret that the Unified Budget was not adopted.

At the same time, we believe that the Minsk Process mechanisms should remain in place until an agreement on peace and normalization of inter-State relations between Armenia and Azerbaijan is achieved. Armenia is convinced that such an agreement is within reach.

In closing we welcome the decision and readiness of Cyprus to serve as Chairmanship in 2027, which Armenia strongly supports.

We thank Malta for the warm hospitality.

We request that this statement be attached to the journal of this Ministerial Council meeting.

Thank you.

**Second day of the Thirty-First Meeting****MC(31) Journal, Agenda item 8****STATEMENT BY  
THE DELEGATION OF TÜRKİYE**

Excellencies,  
Distinguished colleagues,

First, we would like to express our appreciation to His Excellency Minister Borg and his dedicated team led by Ambassador Meli Daudey for steering the OSCE in this very challenging year.

I also wish to extend our gratitude to Malta for the warm hospitality.

We welcome the adoption of the decisions on the appointment of the leadership of the “top four” positions. This is a positive sign for the future.

For the first time, a Turkish official – a highly experienced Turkish diplomat – will assume the position of Secretary General. Key executive structures are designed to support the Organization’s mission of promoting security, co-operation and stability across the OSCE area by means of implementing our decisions and common commitments. We firmly believe that with their outstanding careers and extensive experiences, the top four officials will provide concrete contributions to the functionality of our Organization.

Yet, we still have burning issues before us that need to be solved for the proper, effective and sustainable functioning of the Organization. The lack of the Unified Budget negatively impairs the overall capability of our Organization since 2022. We believe that it would be possible to reach consensus on this issue as well – with creative and acceptable solutions, taking into account the realities and the expectations of all participating States.

To overcome the problems before us, we sincerely need to prioritize the OSCE. Prioritizing the OSCE, above all, necessitates an honest grasp of its essence.

We should always keep in mind that the OSCE’s spirit has been based on a strategic vision. This vision entails that all participating States embrace a co-operative approach with the aim of advancing common interests through dialogue. The constant efforts to achieve consensus itself is the basis of the OSCE which is often described as an Organization of “non-like-minded” States. Therefore, the “consensus rule” must remain at the core of our decision-making.

Dialogue, compromise and confidence-building form the very basis of our Organization. If only we make use of these indispensable features at all times, the OSCE will be able to assume its well-deserved strategic role in a multilateral system.

At a time of an increasingly volatile and rapidly deteriorating geopolitical situation, we need to revitalize our Organization to serve its core purpose of existence which is to manage properly the security and threat perceptions and challenges of and among the participating States.

Ultimately, this is not only an obligation for all of us but also a necessity for our common and comprehensive security.

Having a culture of engagement is essential to overcome the current deficit of trust in the OSCE. As we are approaching the anniversary of the adoption of the Helsinki Final Act, we should all reaffirm the OSCE's commitments and principles.

To conclude, dialogue is indispensable for evaluating the existing problems in the OSCE area.

We look forward to supporting Finland as the Chairmanship-in-Office in 2025, marking 50 years of the Helsinki Final Act.

Thank you.

**Second day of the Thirty-First Meeting****MC(31) Journal, Agenda item 10****STATEMENT BY  
THE DELEGATION OF FINLAND**

Thank you very much Mr. Chairperson, Deputy Prime Minister Borg,

Let me start by thanking you personally and your able team in Valletta and in Vienna for this successful Ministerial Council meeting. You have navigated the year with exceptional skill.

Finland commends you for keeping your first overarching priority, Russia's illegal war of aggression against Ukraine, at the top of the OSCE agenda.

With your leadership, we reached consensus on the appointment of a new OSCE Secretary General and the heads of institutions. You left no stone unturned to get the budget for 2024 approved. Your work is a true example of commitment to multilateralism – an element so much needed today.

Mr. Chairperson,

This Ministerial Council meeting has set the stage for Finland to take on the OSCE Chairmanship in 2025, a year that also marks the 50th anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act.

The message from this Ministerial Council meeting has been loud and clear on three key issues.

First, Russia must end its war of aggression in Ukraine and Russia must be held accountable for this devastating war.

Second, the Helsinki Final Act must remain the bedrock of our security and all States need to reaffirm the OSCE commitments and principles.

Reaching consensus often requires concessions, but the agreed OSCE core principles – enshrined in the UN Charter – are not negotiable.

Third, participating States attach great importance to the work of the OSCE across the area – particularly through its twelve field operations and three autonomous institutions: the

Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, the High Commissioner on National Minorities, and the Representative on Freedom of the Media.

As Chairmanship in 2025, Finland will put particular focus on those three areas that this Ministerial Council meeting has highlighted – support to Ukraine, the Helsinki principles and strengthening the OSCE.

Mr. Chairperson,

I will present the Finnish Chairmanship programme in January, but let me highlight a few questions that will guide our activities as Chairmanship.

Supporting Ukraine remains our top priority, in all dimensions. At the same time, Finland is committed to working across the OSCE area toward the settlement of conflicts, easing of tensions and building of trust.

The overarching topic of our Chairmanship programme is resilience – both of the participating States and of the Organization. We aim to enhance the Organization's operational capacity and empower people in our neighbouring areas to live in democratic States governed by the rule of law.

Resilience, the ability to respond to and recover from crises, has gained increased attention among participating States due to Russia's military aggression against Ukraine.

However, it covers also challenges beyond military threats, from responding to various types of malign activities or addressing climate change, to making us immune to disinformation.

A resilient participating State is a democracy that promotes equality, respects human rights and the rule of law. Broad participation rights and plurality of voices are part of a resilient society, and therefore we emphasize inclusion during our Chairmanship.

The OSCE, with its comprehensive concept of security, is well placed to tackle these issues. We will tap into those areas where the OSCE adds most value.

We will work under three guiding principles: "respect", "respond", and "prepare". This means respect for the OSCE's principles and commitments, responding to current challenges and preparing for the future.

I would like to thank you and all other ministers and heads of delegation for the encouraging words to the incoming Chairmanship and our team.

Finland will assume the Chairmanship with a sense of responsibility and determination. We will aim to have an open dialogue with all participating States and Partners for Co-operation.

We will serve as a constructive Chairmanship, listening attentively and collaborating closely with all States committed to promoting co-operative security through the OSCE.

Mr. Chairperson,

On behalf of Finland, let me once more congratulate you for an excellent stewardship of the OSCE this year. We will continue close co-operation as part of the OSCE Troika.

The Organization now also has a perspective beyond 2025. We warmly welcome the readiness of participating States to respond to the demand and step up for future Chairmanships of the OSCE.

We look forward to welcoming you all to the next Ministerial Council meeting. I am glad that it will be held at the seat of the OSCE – in Vienna.

I thank you.

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**DECISION No. 1/24**  
**TIME AND PLACE OF THE NEXT MEETING OF THE**  
**OSCE MINISTERIAL COUNCIL**

The Ministerial Council,

Decides that the Thirty-First Meeting of the OSCE Ministerial Council will be held in Malta on 5 and 6 December 2024.

MC.DEC/1/24  
5 June 2024  
Attachment 1

Original: ENGLISH

**INTERPRETATIVE STATEMENT UNDER  
PARAGRAPH IV.1(A)6 OF THE RULES OF PROCEDURE  
OF THE ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY AND  
CO-OPERATION IN EUROPE**

By the delegation of Liechtenstein (also on behalf of Albania, Austria, Canada, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Malta, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom):

“I am speaking on behalf of the following participating States – Albania, Austria, Canada, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Malta, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, and my own country Liechtenstein – in relation to the Ministerial Council decision on the time and place of the next meeting of the OSCE Ministerial Council.

In this context, we wish to make the following interpretative statement under paragraph IV.1(A)6 of the OSCE Rules of Procedure:

Our delegations fully support this decision and look forward to the Ministerial Council meeting to be held in Malta on 5 and 6 December 2024.

We would, however, like to express our position that determining the time and place of the Ministerial Council meetings should not require a separate decision by the Ministerial Council nor by the Permanent Council. Instead, to promote efficiency, this determination should be entrusted to the Chairmanship-in-Office.

Consequently, we would support amending the OSCE Rules of Procedure to this effect.

Thank you, Madam Chairperson.”

MC.DEC/1/24  
5 June 2024  
Attachment 2

ENGLISH  
Original: RUSSIAN

**INTERPRETATIVE STATEMENT UNDER  
PARAGRAPH IV.1(A)6 OF THE RULES OF PROCEDURE  
OF THE ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY AND  
CO-OPERATION IN EUROPE**

By the delegation of the Russian Federation:

“Having joined the consensus regarding the adoption of a Ministerial Council decision on the time and place of the next meeting of the OSCE Ministerial Council, the Russian Federation assumes that exhaustive measures will be taken by Malta as the host country of that event, and also by all transit countries, to ensure that the representatives of all OSCE participating States without exception, at the political level chosen by these States themselves, are able to attend the Ministerial Council meeting. This implies no discrimination with regard to the composition of national delegations, and also no impediments to the overflight or transit of members of delegations to the venue of the Ministerial Council meeting by the means of their choice, which may include special flights. In that regard, we take note of the assurances by the OSCE Chairmanship that Malta will make all the necessary efforts to that end.

We stress that the improper implementation of OSCE decisions governing the convening of a Ministerial Council meeting will make it impossible for any decisions or documents to be adopted at the meeting.

I request that this statement be attached to the adopted decision and included in the journal of today’s meeting of the Permanent Council.”

**Second day of the Thirty-First Meeting  
MC(31) Journal, Agenda item 7****DECISION No. 2/24  
APPOINTMENT OF THE OSCE SECRETARY GENERAL**

The Ministerial Council,

Recalling the decision of the Ministerial Council taken at its third meeting in Stockholm in 1992 to establish the post of Secretary General, Ministerial Council Decision No. 15/04 of 7 December 2004 on the role of the OSCE Secretary General, Ministerial Council Decision No. 18/06 of 5 December 2006 on further strengthening the effectiveness of OSCE executive structures and Ministerial Council Decision No. 3/08 of 22 October 2008 on the periods of service of the OSCE Secretary General,

Reaffirming the necessity that the OSCE Secretary General carries out his functions in full compliance with the OSCE principles, commitments and decisions as well as with the mandate of the OSCE Secretary General,

Considering that, according to Ministerial Council Decision No. 3/23 the term of office of the Secretary General of the OSCE, Ms. Helga Maria Schmid, came to an end on 3 September 2024,

Decides to appoint Mr. Feridun H. Sinirlioğlu as Secretary General of the OSCE for three years with effect from 6 December 2024.

MC.DEC/2/24  
6 December 2024  
Attachment 1

Original: ENGLISH

**INTERPRETATIVE STATEMENT UNDER  
PARAGRAPH IV.1(A)6 OF THE RULES OF PROCEDURE  
OF THE ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY AND  
CO-OPERATION IN EUROPE**

By the delegation of the United States of America:

“Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

In connection with the adoption of the decision for the appointment of the OSCE Secretary General, the United States would like to make the following interpretative statement under paragraph IV.1(A)6 of the OSCE Rules of Procedure. The United States welcomes the appointment of Mr. Feridun H. Sinirlioğlu. We support the work of the Secretary General and the OSCE Secretariat.

The Secretary General derives authority from the collective decisions of the participating States and acts under the guidance of the Chairperson-in-Office. He or she is the Chief Administrative Officer of the OSCE, and is tasked, among other things, to act as the representative of the Chairperson-in-Office and support him or her in all activities aimed at fulfilling the goals of the OSCE. Nothing in this decision should be interpreted to alter the mandate of the Secretary General or restrict the work of the Secretary General in the full exercise of his or her mandate.

Finally, the United States regrets that participating States failed to adopt this decision before the previous Secretary General’s term expired on 3 September. We underscore that it is the OSCE participating States which have adopted the OSCE’s principles, commitments, and decisions. It is first and foremost the responsibility of the participating States to implement them.

I request that this interpretative statement be attached to the decision and that it be included in the journal of the day.

Thank you, Madam Chairperson.”

MC.DEC/2/24  
6 December 2024  
Attachment 2

Original: ENGLISH

**INTERPRETATIVE STATEMENT UNDER  
PARAGRAPH IV.1(A)6 OF THE RULES OF PROCEDURE  
OF THE ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY AND  
CO-OPERATION IN EUROPE**

By the delegation of Canada (also on behalf of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Iceland, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Monaco, Norway, Romania, Sweden and Switzerland):

“In relation to the decision on the appointment of the OSCE Secretary General, we would like to make the following interpretative statement under paragraph IV.1(A)6 of the OSCE Rules of Procedure on behalf of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Iceland, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Monaco, Norway, Romania, Sweden, Switzerland and Canada:

We reiterate our gratitude to Malta’s Chairmanship for their leadership in forging consensus on critical issues, thereby enhancing the OSCE’s effectiveness.

We welcome the appointment of Mr. Feridun H. Sinirlioğlu as Secretary General of the OSCE and we reiterate our commitment to the work of the Secretary General and the OSCE Secretariat.

We regret that consensus on the leadership of the Organization could not be reached earlier, leading to extended vacancies in these critical positions. This should not set a precedent for future similar decisions.

We reiterate the importance of co-operative decisions on the leadership of the Organization and the autonomous institutions that should be based on individual candidates and their ability to support OSCE principles and commitments. As participating States, we should avoid politicization of the consensus-based process and return to the spirit of multilateralism that guides our collaborative decision process.

Furthermore, we as participating States should strive to ensure gender equality in the leadership of the Organization, including by putting forward more women as candidates.

The Secretary General role is to be guided by Ministerial Council Decision No. 15/04. We recall that the Secretary General derives his/her authority from the collective decisions of the participating States and acts under the guidance of the Chairperson-in-Office, and that as representative of the Chairperson-in-Office supports him/her in all activities aimed at fulfilling the goals of the OSCE. We also recall that as Chief Administrative Officer of the OSCE the Secretary General is responsible to the Permanent Council for the efficient use of

the Organization's resources and, as head of the OSCE Secretariat, is responsible for its effective and efficient management.

We would like to request that this statement be attached to the decision and reflected in the journal of the day."

MC.DEC/2/24  
6 December 2024  
Attachment 3

Original: ENGLISH

**INTERPRETATIVE STATEMENT UNDER  
PARAGRAPH IV.1(A)6 OF THE RULES OF PROCEDURE  
OF THE ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY AND  
CO-OPERATION IN EUROPE**

By the delegation of Albania:

“Thank you, Chairperson,

The delegation of Albania would like to make the following interpretative statement under paragraph IV.1(A)6 of the Rules of Procedure of the OSCE in connection with the adoption of the Ministerial Council decision on the appointment of the OSCE Secretary General:

Albania joined the consensus on the appointments agreed at this Ministerial Council meeting for the positions of the OSCE Secretary General, the Director of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, the High Commissioner on National Minorities, and the Representative on Freedom of the Media, and wishes them success in carrying out their duties.

We reaffirm Albania’s long-standing and well-established commitment to security, co-operation, dialogue and multilateralism, which has been consistently demonstrated, both within and beyond the OSCE.

In light of the importance that Albania attaches to the OSCE and with a view to ensuring quality in its management, Albania put forward a high-profile candidate for the position of OSCE Secretary General.

We believe his unique and strong connection to the OSCE – serving throughout his career as Permanent Representative, Chairperson of the Permanent Council, Director at the Secretariat, and Minister of Foreign Affairs – along with his distinguished professional experience and diplomatic expertise, made him precisely the right person for the assignment at this critical juncture for the Organization.

Albania’s candidate for OSCE Secretary General garnered clear and enthusiastic support from an overwhelming majority of participating States and faced no substantive objections. This was evident during numerous consultations, including his numerous personal engagements with delegations in Vienna, as well as in Preparatory Committee and informal ambassadorial meetings. To our understanding, this support remained unchanged throughout the process.

However, in an effort to overcome the stalemate and recognizing the importance of filling the senior management positions, Albania chose not to obstruct consensus on other candidates. This decision was made despite the significant influence of political considerations over merit-based principles in this process, which may have resulted in a decision that does not reflect the preferences of the majority.

It is Albania's firm belief that the OSCE executive structures are a shared asset of all 57 participating States. We remain convinced that greater inclusivity in senior roles, especially when based on the undeniable professional merits of candidates from smaller countries, would advance the Organization's interests and strengthen its sense of collective ownership.

We owe it to ourselves and to our people, including the more than 2,000 dedicated men and women that work for this Organization, not just to make decisions, but to make the right ones and deliver the right messages that reflect our values and drive the Organization forward.

We extend our sincere gratitude to the many partners who supported us throughout this process, offering their trust, solidarity and principled backing. Your advocacy for fairness and equity reinforces our unwavering commitment to the values that underpin this Organization.

I request that this statement be attached to the adopted decision and included in the journal of the Ministerial Council meeting.

Thank you."

MC.DEC/2/24  
6 December 2024  
Attachment 4

Original: ENGLISH

**INTERPRETATIVE STATEMENT UNDER  
PARAGRAPH IV.1(A)6 OF THE RULES OF PROCEDURE  
OF THE ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY AND  
CO-OPERATION IN EUROPE**

By the delegation of the United Kingdom:

“Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

In connection with the approval of the Ministerial Council decision on the appointment of the OSCE Secretary General, the United Kingdom would like to make the following interpretative statement under Paragraph IV.1(A)6 of the OSCE Rules of Procedure.

The United Kingdom joins the consensus on the appointment of Mr. Feridun H. Sinirlioğlu as Secretary General of the OSCE, and wishes him every success in the role. We offer the United Kingdom’s full support to the new Secretary General in taking forward his mandate. We continue to urge participating States to ensure all OSCE structures, autonomous institutions and field operations are adequately financed to fulfil their mandates.

We note that, alongside the appointments to other OSCE leadership positions, this decision supports the predictability and stability of the OSCE over the coming three years.

Mr. Chairperson, I request that this interpretative statement be attached to this decision and included in the journal of the day.”

MC.DEC/2/24  
6 December 2024  
Attachment 5

Original: ENGLISH

**INTERPRETATIVE STATEMENT UNDER  
PARAGRAPH IV.1(A)6 OF THE RULES OF PROCEDURE  
OF THE ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY AND  
CO-OPERATION IN EUROPE**

By the delegation of Armenia:

“Madam Chairperson,

The delegation of the Republic of Armenia would like to make the following interpretative statement under paragraph IV.1(A)6 of the Rules of Procedure of the OSCE in connection with the adoption of the Ministerial Council decisions on the appointment of the OSCE Secretary General, the Director of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities, and on the appointment of the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media.

It is our conviction that while building consensus on the appointment of the ‘top four’ positions of the OSCE institutions, the participating States were driven by the best interests of this Organization, upholding the importance of preserving its functionality, integrity and the ability to continue the mandated work of the OSCE based on our common principles, as well as the letter and spirit of decisions adopted in this framework.

We further believe that the distinguished heads of institutions should be cognizant of this critical reality and during their tenure should act in accordance with it. In all their activities they should do their best within their mandates to only strengthen this collaborative attitude of the participating States that led to their appointment and that is vital for properly performing the OSCE’s mission in these most challenging times in a principled and inclusive manner.

Having this in mind, Armenia wishes all the best to the newly appointed heads of institutions in dispatching their important duties.

We kindly ask that this interpretative statement be attached to the decision adopted and reflected in the journal of the day.

Thank you.”

**Second day of the Thirty-First Meeting  
MC(31) Journal, Agenda item 7**

**DECISION No. 3/24  
APPOINTMENT OF THE DIRECTOR OF THE OFFICE FOR  
DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS AND HUMAN RIGHTS**

The Ministerial Council,

Recalling the 1990 Charter of Paris and the decision of the Ministerial Council taken at its second meeting in Prague in 1992 concerning the development of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR),

Reaffirming the necessity that the Director of the ODIHR carries out her functions in full compliance with the OSCE principles, commitments and decisions as well as with the mandate of the ODIHR,

Considering that, according to Ministerial Council Decision No. 4/23, the term of office of the Director of the ODIHR, Mr. Matteo Mecacci, came to an end on 3 September 2024,

Decides to appoint Ms. Maria Telalian as Director of the ODIHR for a period of three years with effect from 6 December 2024.

MC.DEC/3/24  
6 December 2024  
Attachment 1

Original: ENGLISH

**INTERPRETATIVE STATEMENT UNDER  
PARAGRAPH IV.1(A)6 OF THE RULES OF PROCEDURE  
OF THE ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY AND  
CO-OPERATION IN EUROPE**

By the delegation of the United States of America:

“Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

In connection with the adoption of the decision for the appointment of the Director of the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), the United States would like to make the following interpretative statement under paragraph IV.1(A)6 of the OSCE Rules of Procedure.

The United States welcomes the appointment of Ms. Maria Telalian. We fully respect the autonomy and support the work of the ODIHR. Unfortunately, in recent years, there has been pressure from some participating States to weaken the OSCE’s autonomous institutions and cut resources for them. Nothing in this decision should be interpreted to diminish the autonomy of or restrict the work of the Director of the ODIHR in the full exercise of his or her mandate.

Finally, the United States regrets that participating States failed to adopt this decision before the previous ODIHR Director’s term expired on 3 September. We underscore that it is the OSCE participating States which have adopted the OSCE’s principles, commitments and decisions. It is first and foremost the responsibility of the participating States to implement them.

I request that this interpretative statement be attached to the decision and that it be included in the journal of the day.

Thank you, Madam Chairperson.”

MC.DEC/3/24  
6 December 2024  
Attachment 2

Original: ENGLISH

**INTERPRETATIVE STATEMENT UNDER  
PARAGRAPH IV.1(A)6 OF THE RULES OF PROCEDURE  
OF THE ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY AND  
CO-OPERATION IN EUROPE**

By the delegation of Sweden (also on behalf of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Canada, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Iceland, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Monaco, Norway, Romania and Switzerland):

“In relation to the decision on the appointment of the Director of the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), we would like to make the following interpretative statement under paragraph IV.1(A)6 of the OSCE Rules of Procedure on behalf of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Canada, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Iceland, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Monaco, Norway, Romania, Switzerland and Sweden:

We reiterate our gratitude to Malta’s Chairmanship for their leadership in forging consensus on critical issues, thereby enhancing the OSCE’s effectiveness.

We welcome the appointment of Ms. Maria Telalian as Director of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights.

We regret that consensus on the leadership of the Organization could not be reached earlier, leading to extended vacancies in these critical positions. This should not set a precedent for future similar decisions.

We reiterate the importance of co-operative decisions on the leadership of the Organization and the autonomous institutions that should be based on individual candidates and their ability to support OSCE principles and commitments. As participating States, we should avoid politicization of the consensus-based process and return to the spirit of multilateralism that guides our collaborative decision process.

Furthermore, we as participating States should strive to ensure gender equality in the leadership of the Organization, including by putting forward more women as candidates.

In connection to the decision on the appointment of the Director of the ODIHR, we would reiterate our strong support for the ODIHR’s mandate and autonomous work in the promotion of democracy, the rule of law and human rights. We also recall the ODIHR’s election observation mandate and note that the ODIHR’s election observation methodology is based on the principles of independence, impartiality and professionalism, is applied in the same manner in all participating States, and is globally recognized. We highlight the crucial role of its Director in exercising the ODIHR’s mandate.

In recent years, some participating States have misused consensus to prevent the allocation of resources to the third dimension. We reiterate our position that the OSCE should have adequate resources to fulfil its mandate across all three dimensions.

We would like to request that this interpretative statement be attached to the decision and included in the journal of the day.”

MC.DEC/3/24  
6 December 2024  
Attachment 3

Original: ENGLISH

**INTERPRETATIVE STATEMENT UNDER  
PARAGRAPH IV.1(A)6 OF THE RULES OF PROCEDURE  
OF THE ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY AND  
CO-OPERATION IN EUROPE**

By the delegation of the United Kingdom:

“Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

In connection with the approval of the Ministerial Council decision on the appointment of the Director of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), the United Kingdom would like to make the following interpretative statement under Paragraph IV.1(A)6 of the OSCE Rules of Procedure.

The United Kingdom joins the consensus on the appointment of Ms. Maria Telalian as Director of the ODIHR and wishes her every success in the role. The ODIHR’s role is a manifestation of the principle that lasting security can only be achieved through respect for human rights and strong democratic institutions. The United Kingdom fully respects the autonomy of the ODIHR and calls on all participating States to offer their full support to the new Director in taking forward her mandate. We urge participating States to ensure the ODIHR is adequately financed to fulfil its mandate.

We note that, alongside the appointments to other OSCE leadership positions, this decision supports the predictability and stability of the OSCE over the coming three years.

Mr. Chairperson, I request that this interpretative statement be attached to this decision and included in the journal of the day.”

**Second day of the Thirty-First Meeting  
MC(31) Journal, Agenda item 7****DECISION No. 4/24  
APPOINTMENT OF THE OSCE HIGH COMMISSIONER ON  
NATIONAL MINORITIES**

The Ministerial Council,

Recalling the decision of the CSCE Helsinki Summit 1992 to establish a High Commissioner on National Minorities,

Reaffirming the necessity that the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities carries out his functions in full compliance with the OSCE principles, commitments and decisions as well as with the mandate of the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities,

Considering that, according to Ministerial Council Decision No. 5/23, the term of office of the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities, Mr. Kairat Abdrakhmanov, came to an end on 3 September 2024,

Decides to appoint Mr. Christophe Kamp as OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities for a period of three years with effect from 6 December 2024.

MC.DEC/4/24  
6 December 2024  
Attachment 1

Original: ENGLISH

**INTERPRETATIVE STATEMENT UNDER  
PARAGRAPH IV.1(A)6 OF THE RULES OF PROCEDURE  
OF THE ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY AND  
CO-OPERATION IN EUROPE**

By the delegation of the United States of America:

“Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

In connection with the adoption of the decision for the appointment of the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities (HCNM), the United States would like to make the following interpretative statement under paragraph IV.1(A)6 of the OSCE Rules of Procedure. The United States welcomes the appointment of Mr. Christophe Kamp. We fully respect the autonomy and support the work of the HCNM.

Unfortunately, in recent years, there has been pressure from some participating States to weaken the OSCE’s autonomous institutions and cut resources for them. Nothing in this decision should be interpreted to diminish the autonomy of or restrict the work of the HCNM in the full exercise of his or her mandate.

Finally, the United States regrets that participating States failed to adopt this decision before the previous HCNM’s term expired on 3 September. We underscore that it is the OSCE participating States which have adopted the OSCE’s principles, commitments and decisions. It is first and foremost the responsibility of participating States to implement them.

I request that this interpretative statement be attached to the decision and that it be included in the journal of the day.

Thank you, Madam Chairperson.”

MC.DEC/4/24  
6 December 2024  
Attachment 2

Original: ENGLISH

**INTERPRETATIVE STATEMENT UNDER  
PARAGRAPH IV.1(A)6 OF THE RULES OF PROCEDURE  
OF THE ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY AND  
CO-OPERATION IN EUROPE**

By the delegation of Denmark (also on behalf of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Canada, Czechia, Estonia, Iceland, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Monaco, Norway, Romania, Sweden and Switzerland):

“In relation to the decision on the appointment of the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities (HCNM), we would like to make the following interpretative statement under paragraph IV.1(A)6 of the OSCE Rules of Procedure on behalf of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Canada, Czechia, Estonia, Iceland, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Monaco, Norway, Romania, Sweden, Switzerland and Denmark:

We welcome the appointment of Mr. Christophe Kamp as OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities, and we reiterate our commitment to the autonomy and the work of the HCNM.

We reiterate our gratitude to Malta’s Chairmanship for their leadership in forging consensus on critical issues, thereby enhancing the OSCE’s effectiveness.

We regret that consensus on the leadership of the Organization could not be reached earlier, leading to extended vacancies in these critical positions. This should not set a precedent for future similar decisions.

We reiterate the importance of co-operative decisions on the leadership of the Organization and the autonomous institutions that should be based on individual candidates and their ability to support OSCE principles and commitments. As participating States, we should avoid politicization of the consensus-based process and return to the spirit of multilateralism that guides our collaborative decision process.

Furthermore, we as participating States should strive to ensure gender equality in the leadership of the Organization, including by putting forward more women as candidates.

In recent years, some participating States have sought to weaken the OSCE’s autonomous institutions and have misused consensus to prevent the allocation of resources to all three dimensions. We reiterate our position that the OSCE should have adequate resources to fulfil its mandate across all three dimensions.

I would request that this interpretative statement be attached to the decision and included in the journal of the day.”

MC.DEC/4/24  
6 December 2024  
Attachment 3

Original: ENGLISH

**INTERPRETATIVE STATEMENT UNDER  
PARAGRAPH IV.1(A)6 OF THE RULES OF PROCEDURE  
OF THE ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY AND  
CO-OPERATION IN EUROPE**

By the delegation of the United Kingdom:

“Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

In connection with the approval of the Ministerial Council decision on the appointment of the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities (HCNM), the United Kingdom would like to make the following interpretative statement under paragraph IV.1(A)6 of the OSCE Rules of Procedure.

The United Kingdom joins the consensus on the appointment of Mr. Christophe Kamp as OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities and wishes him every success in the role. The United Kingdom fully respects the autonomy of the HCNM and calls on all participating States to offer their full support to the new High Commissioner in taking forward his mandate. We continue to urge participating States to ensure the HCNM is adequately financed to fulfil its mandate.

We note that, alongside the appointments to other OSCE leadership positions, this decision supports the predictability and stability of the OSCE over the coming three years.

Mr. Chairperson, I request that this interpretative statement be attached to this decision and included in the journal of the day.”

**Second day of the Thirty-First Meeting  
MC(31) Journal, Agenda item 7****DECISION No. 5/24  
APPOINTMENT OF THE OSCE REPRESENTATIVE ON  
FREEDOM OF THE MEDIA**

The Ministerial Council,

Recalling Permanent Council Decision No. 193 of 5 November 1997 on establishing an OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media,

Reaffirming the necessity that the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media carries out his functions in full compliance with the OSCE principles, commitments and decisions as well as with the mandate of the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media,

Considering that, according to Ministerial Council Decision No. 6/23 the term of office of the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, Ms. Teresa Ribeiro, came to an end on 3 September 2024,

Decides to appoint Mr. Jan Braathu as OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media for a period of three years with effect from 6 December 2024.

MC.DEC/5/24  
6 December 2024  
Attachment 1

Original: ENGLISH

**INTERPRETATIVE STATEMENT UNDER  
PARAGRAPH IV.1(A)6 OF THE RULES OF PROCEDURE  
OF THE ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY AND  
CO-OPERATION IN EUROPE**

By the delegation of the United States of America:

“Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

In connection with the adoption of the decision for the appointment of the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media (RFOM), the United States would like to make the following interpretative statement under paragraph IV.1(A)6 of the OSCE Rules of Procedure.

The United States welcomes the appointment of Mr. Jan Braathu. We fully respect the autonomy and support the work of the RFOM.

Unfortunately, in recent years, there has been pressure from some participating States to weaken the OSCE’s autonomous institutions and cut resources for them. Nothing in this decision should be interpreted to diminish the autonomy of or restrict the work of the RFOM in the full exercise of his or her mandate.

Finally, the United States regrets that participating States failed to adopt this decision before the previous RFOM’s term expired on 3 September. We underscore that it is the OSCE participating States which have adopted the OSCE’s principles, commitments and decisions. It is first and foremost the responsibility of the participating States to implement them.

I request that this interpretative statement be attached to the decision and that it be included in the journal of the day.

Thank you, Madam Chairperson.”

MC.DEC/5/24  
6 December 2024  
Attachment 2

Original: ENGLISH

**INTERPRETATIVE STATEMENT UNDER  
PARAGRAPH IV.1(A)6 OF THE RULES OF PROCEDURE  
OF THE ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY AND  
CO-OPERATION IN EUROPE**

By the delegation of Iceland (also on behalf of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Canada, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Monaco, Norway, Romania, Sweden, and Switzerland):

“In relation to the decision on the appointment of the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media (RFOM), we would like to make the following interpretative statement under paragraph IV.1(A)6 of the OSCE Rules of Procedure on behalf of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Canada, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Monaco, Norway, Romania, Sweden, Switzerland and Iceland:

We reiterate our gratitude to Malta’s Chairmanship for their leadership in forging consensus on critical issues, thereby enhancing the OSCE’s effectiveness.

We regret that consensus on the leadership of the Organization could not be reached earlier, leading to extended vacancies in these critical positions. This should not set a precedent for future similar decisions.

We reiterate the importance of co-operative decisions on the leadership of the Organization and the autonomous institutions that should be based on individual candidates and their ability to support OSCE principles and commitments. As participating States, we should avoid politicization of the consensus-based process and return to the spirit of multilateralism that guides our collaborative decision process.

Furthermore, we as participating States should strive to ensure gender equality in the leadership of the Organization, including by putting forward more women as candidates.

We welcome the appointment of Mr. Jan Braathu as Representative on Freedom of the Media (RFOM). We reiterate our commitment to support the work and autonomy of the RFOM. We reaffirm our expectation, as set out in Permanent Council Decision No. 193, that the RFOM should be impartial, independent and objective.

In recent years, some participating States have misused consensus to prevent the allocation of resources to the third dimension. We reiterate our position that the OSCE should have adequate resources to fulfil its mandate across all three dimensions.

I would request that this interpretative statement be attached to the decision and included in the journal of the day.”

MC.DEC/5/24  
6 December 2024  
Attachment 3

Original: ENGLISH

**INTERPRETATIVE STATEMENT UNDER  
PARAGRAPH IV.1(A)6 OF THE RULES OF PROCEDURE  
OF THE ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY AND  
CO-OPERATION IN EUROPE**

By the delegation of the United Kingdom:

“Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

In connection with the approval of the Ministerial Council decision on the appointment of the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media (RFOM), the United Kingdom would like to make the following interpretative statement under paragraph IV.1(A)6 of the OSCE Rules of Procedure.

The United Kingdom joins the consensus on the appointment of Mr. Jan Braathu as OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media and wishes him every success in the role. The United Kingdom fully respects the autonomy of the RFOM and calls on all participating States to offer their full support to the new OSCE Representative in taking forward his mandate. We continue to urge participating States to ensure the RFOM is adequately financed to fulfil its mandate.

We note that, alongside the appointments to other OSCE leadership positions, this decision supports the predictability and stability of the OSCE over the coming three years.

Mr. Chairperson, I request that this interpretative statement be attached to this decision and included in the journal of the day.”

**Second day of the Thirty-First Meeting  
MC(31) Journal, Agenda item 7**

**DECISION No. 6/24  
TIME AND PLACE OF THE NEXT MEETING OF THE  
OSCE MINISTERIAL COUNCIL**

The Ministerial Council,

Decides that the Thirty-Second Meeting of the OSCE Ministerial Council will be held in Vienna on 4 and 5 December 2025.