

Buantoscáireacht na hÉireann
don Eagraíocht um Shlándaíl agus Comhar san Eoraip
Permanent Mission of Ireland to the
Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe



**Statement by the Minister of State for European Affairs and Defence of Ireland,
Mr Thomas Byrne TD, at the 32nd Meeting of the OSCE Ministerial Council**

4 December 2025

Thank you Chair, Dear Minister Valtonen,

Ireland aligns with the statement made by the European Union.

I thank you and your team for your leadership in a challenging period for our Organisation. The Helsinki +50 process you have led reaffirms the vital contribution the OSCE has made to shaping European security over five decades.

I can assure Switzerland, and Minister Ignazio Cassis, of Ireland's full support as you take on the role of Chair-in-Office. I also thank our generous Austrian hosts, and the OSCE staff, for their tireless dedication.

As a founding member, Ireland remains deeply committed to the OSCE. The principles and commitments of the Helsinki Final Act are not abstract notions. They provide the foundation for security and cooperation across our region. These principles, and the wider multilateral system, are under huge strain.

Russia's illegal war against Ukraine is not only an assault on international law and the UN Charter, but on the very basis upon which this Organisation was founded. Russia's brutal aggression continues to cause appalling suffering. This must stop. We all want to see peace – but how we make peace matters.

As my Prime Minister, Taoiseach Micheál Martin, stated during President Zelensky's visit to Ireland this week – “for as long as Ukraine needs our help and support, Ireland will be there for you”.

We must ensure a just, lasting and comprehensive peace, which upholds Ukrainian sovereignty and independence with strong security guarantees. Ukraine and Europe must be involved in any negotiations concerning our own security.

Let me reiterate our demand for the immediate and unconditional release of all prisoners of war and civilians arbitrarily detained by Russia, including three OSCE officials, Vadym Golda, Maxim Petrov and Dmytro Shabanov.

Madam Chair,

The protection of human rights is at the core of the OSCE acquis. Yet we are witnessing backsliding on human rights, gender equality, and LGBTI+ rights. On democratic norms and processes, and civil society space. Now more than ever, we need to stand up for our values. We also know the potential of this Organisation.

I want to highlight three areas where the OSCE can make a difference: First, the unique role of the OSCE as a platform for dialogue on security, confidence building and arms control has never been clearer. But genuine dialogue requires genuine engagement.



Second, to truly benefit from the OSCE's comprehensive approach to security, requires engagement across all three dimensions. We cannot pick and choose.

Third, the OSCE must continue to be a force for advancing accountability and justice, including through tools like the Moscow Mechanism.

I welcome the recent advances by Armenia and Azerbaijan, demonstrating that dialogue, engagement and strong leadership can lead to positive results on the journey towards peace.

Our own history of peacebuilding has taught us that peace is a process, and that accountability and a comprehensive approach are essential for lasting peace. The essential role of women in the Northern Ireland peace process also shows just how important the full, equal and meaningful participation of women is in building sustainable peace.

Madam Chair,

To operate effectively, our Organisation needs not just political will and engagement, but the resources to deliver. This includes the autonomous bodies such as ODIHR, and their role in areas such as election monitoring, media freedom, human rights, and the work of our field operations.

We can look to efficiencies and improvements. But, the most important things we can do is agree a sustainable budget to enable the OSCE to carry out its essential work.

Madam Chair,

As Ireland prepares to assume the EU Presidency next July, we look forward to working closely with participating States to advance shared commitments. The OSCE was born out of dialogue under the heavy cloud of division. From a willingness to do the hard work required to build consensus. The founding vision - that real security across our region can only be achieved together - remains as vital today as it was 50 years ago.

It is our responsibility to safeguard the spirit of Helsinki and protect this Organisation for future generations.

Thank you.