Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

V I E N N A

2025

Thirty-Second Meeting of the Ministerial Council 4 and 5 December 2025

Decisions of the Ministerial Council

Statements by the Chairperson-in-Office of the OSCE and delegations

Reports to the Ministerial Council

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I. DECISIONS OF THE MINISTERIAL COUNCIL

DECISION No. 1/25
CLOSURE OF THE OSCE MINSK PROCESS, PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVE OF THE OSCE CHAIRPERSON-IN-OFFICE ON THE CONFLICT DEALT WITH BY THE OSCE MINSK CONFERENCE AND THE HIGH-LEVEL PLANNING GROUP

(MC.DEC/1/25 of 1 September 2025)

The Ministerial Council,

Taking note of the joint letter of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Armenia and the Republic of Azerbaijan contained in documents SEC.DEL/315/25 and SEC.DEL/316/25,

Acknowledging that the OSCE Minsk Process, the Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office on the Conflict Dealt with by the OSCE Minsk Conference and the High-Level Planning Group are no longer relevant in view of cardinal changes in the situation that once called for their establishment,

1. Declares the conclusions of the First Additional Meeting of the CSCE Council held in Helsinki on 24 March 1992 on the establishment of a Conference under the auspices of the CSCE (OSCE) which was supposed to take place in Minsk and all provisions reflected in subsequent OSCE decisions and documents deriving from this decision as invalid and not applicable;

2. Decides to close the OSCE Minsk Process, the Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office on the Conflict Dealt with by the OSCE Minsk Conference and the High-Level Planning Group;

3. Approves the financial resources contained in the document CIO.GAL/102/25 reflecting the financial implications of the closure of the mentioned structures;

4. Tasks the OSCE Secretariat to implement the activities contained in document CIO.GAL/102/25, and report the completion of all the required procedures to the Permanent Council.

Attachment to MC.DEC/1/25

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:

"In connection with the adoption of the Ministerial Council decision on the closure of the OSCE Minsk Process, Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office on the Conflict Dealt with by the OSCE Minsk Conference and the High-Level Planning Group, the delegation of Armenia would like to make the following interpretative statement under paragraph IV.1(A)6 of the OSCE Rules of Procedure.

Armenia, together with Azerbaijan, initiated the adoption of this decision based on the Joint Appeal by the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Armenia and the Republic of Azerbaijan to the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office signed in Washington, D.C. on 8 August 2025.

On the same day, the foreign ministers of Armenia and Azerbaijan initialled the agreed upon text of the Agreement on Establishment of Peace and Inter-State Relations between the Republic of Armenia and the Republic of Azerbaijan.

The initialization was witnessed by the Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia, the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the President of the United States of America, who also signed the Joint Declaration.

The Joint Declaration acknowledged the 'need to chart a course for a bright future not bound by the conflict of the past, consistent with the Charter of the United Nations and the 1991 Almaty Declaration.' It affirmed that the conditions have been created 'to finally embark on building good neighbourly relations on the basis of the inviolability of international borders and the inadmissibility of the use of force for the acquisition of territory after the conflict that brought immense human suffering.' It further stated that this 'reality, which is not and should never be subject to revision, paves the way for closing the chapter of enmity between our two nations.'

In this environment the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Armenia and Azerbaijan jointly appealed to close the Minsk Process structures of the OSCE, since they 'are no longer relevant in view of cardinal changes in the situation that called for their establishment.' The Ministers also confirmed their 'shared commitment to the UN Charter and the Helsinki Final Act to continue the normalization process at the bilateral level.'

In the context of this historic momentum the Republic of Armenia looks forward to the timely signing and ratification of the Peace Agreement.

Thank you."

DECISION No. 2/25
TIME AND PLACE OF THE NEXT MEETING OF THE OSCE MINISTERIAL COUNCIL

(MC.DEC/2/25 of 24 December 2025)

The Ministerial Council,

Decides that the Thirty-Third Meeting of the OSCE Ministerial Council will be held in Lugano on 3 and 4 December 2026.

Attachment to MC.DEC/2/25

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, on all matters relating to the OSCE's activities, Switzerland will strictly adhere to the mandate of the Chairmanship-in-Office, as set out in the 2002 Porto Ministerial Council decision, first and foremost by reflecting the opinion of all 57 participating States and not promoting its national and EU narratives.

We agree to this decision on the understanding that the rights of all delegations to participate fully in the Ministerial Council meeting in Lugano will be guaranteed.

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

II. STATEMENTS BY THE CHAIRPERSON-IN-OFFICE OF THE OSCE AND DELEGATIONS

OPENING STATEMENT BY THE CHAIRPERSON-IN-OFFICE OF THE OSCE

(MC.DEL/2/25 of 4 December 2025)

Dear colleagues,
Ladies and gentlemen,

When Finland assumed the OSCE Chairmanship, we made three clear commitments:

– To uphold the OSCE's core principles.

– To respond to today's urgent challenges.

– And to prepare this Organization for the future.

These commitments have guided everything we have done this year. Respect for the Helsinki principles has been our foundation. The principles define the OSCE's purpose and legitimacy.

At a time when many question whether the OSCE can still serve as a forum for co-operation, Finland has answered with action. We have been inclusive, transparent and principled – always basing our work on international law and in the commitments we all share.

Supporting Ukraine and ensuring accountability for Russia's violations of international law have been at the heart of our Chairmanship.

My visit to Ukraine, just days after taking office, underscored this commitment. I saw the devastation of war first hand – especially during my visit to a children's hospital. I will never forget the fear in young Marija's eyes when the air sirens sounded.

A particular priority has been bringing Ukrainian children back home. Through the Support Programme for Ukraine, the OSCE helps register missing children and support their rehabilitation. We welcome the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly joining the International Coalition for the Return of Ukrainian Children.

The Moscow Mechanism has also been vital for accountability – not only for addressing deportations, but for arbitrary detentions of civilians and the treatment of prisoners of war. Collecting evidence and documenting violations is a long process. The Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights has been doing this work for years now and we are grateful for that. This work will continue.

Dear colleagues,

Our engagement has spanned every region of the OSCE area.

In Moldova, we underlined Moldova's ownership of the Transdniestrian settlement process as well as our support for revitalizing it, through OSCE-facilitated dialogue between

the sides. We remind Russia of its Istanbul Summit 1999 commitment to withdraw forces and equipment – unconditionally and without delay.

The OSCE and its Mission stand ready to dismantle the Cobasna depot, which also poses an environmental risk to the local population. We have proposed an expert visit to the site.

In the South Caucasus, I witnessed positive developments in the peace process between Armenia and Azerbaijan. In August, we reached a consensus to close the Minsk structures dealing with the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict – a vital step that supported the peace process and cleared a major obstacle to adopting the OSCE budget.

In Georgia, our commitment to sovereignty and territorial integrity remains firm. Through the Geneva International Discussions and Incident Prevention and Response Mechanism, we advanced engagement with civil society and explored water diplomacy. My visit also addressed democratic backsliding and the essential role of civil society and the freedom of people.

In Central Asia, we supported increasing regional co-operation and shared best practices from the Nordic model of co-operation. The trilateral border agreement between the Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan creates more possibilities for regional co-operation. Congratulations for this important step.

In South-Eastern Europe, we engaged during critical political moments – supporting Bosnia and Herzegovina's constitutional order, emphasizing social dialogue in Serbia, and backing efforts to resolve Kosovo's political and institutional crisis.

Across the OSCE area, field operations remain essential. They are our ears and eyes on the ground – often where others are absent. From Central Asia to the Western Balkans, they deliver tangible support, be it on environmental security, youth inclusion or media freedom.

Colleagues,

Finland worked tirelessly to secure an approved OSCE budget for 2025. Our unified proposal gained support from all but one State. In this Organization, it does not take two – nor 56 – but 57 to tango. The same applies to selecting the 2027 Chairmanship.

We will persist. Because a budget is not just numbers – it is transparency, reform and the lifeblood of this Organization. And we need strategic foresight beyond a one-year horizon. I urge all of you to engage constructively in selecting the 2027 Chairmanship.

A cornerstone of our Chairmanship has been the Helsinki+50 discussions. These discussions reflected on the OSCE's future and reinforced participating States' ownership. Feedback has been overwhelmingly positive.

We also established the Helsinki+50 Fund, which has already attracted pledges of over 17 million euros from 17 countries – including most major donors. This Fund strengthens the OSCE's operational capacity and strategic focus. This is not just funding – it

is a signal of renewed commitment to the OSCE's future. We invite all donors to join this initiative.

This year, we emphasized the importance of the OSCE's field operations, autonomous institutions and civil society. They advance human rights, democracy and the rule of law – the backbone of comprehensive security.

We launched the OSCE-wide Road Map for the Implementation of Commitments on Women, Peace and Security in May, and today we present the OSCE-wide Road Map for Strengthening OSCE Efforts on Youth, Peace and Security. We also issued recommendations on engaging civil society and improving accessibility for persons with disabilities.

I encourage all of you to explore these documents further – business cards with corresponding QR codes are available in front of you.

Across the OSCE dimensions:

– Politico-military: we deepened work on hybrid threats and cybersecurity, mainstreaming support for Ukraine's resilience. We chaired the Forum for Security Co-operation in the last trimester of the year, focusing on accountability and military command roles.

– Economic and environmental: we addressed the environmental consequences of Russia's war and the climate-security nexus.

– Human dimension: we prioritized media freedom, media literacy, and the protection of human rights defenders – placing Russia's violations at the forefront.

We also worked to enhance the OSCE's preparedness for a post-war scenario in Ukraine. We did contingency planning for a ceasefire and liaised with autonomous institutions on expanding support.

We have spared no effort to secure the release of the three OSCE officials – Vadym Golda, Maksym Petrov, and Dmytro Shabanov – still in detention. Their families wrote to me with a plea that weighs heavily on my heart, and I quote: "We wake each morning with one wish – that our loved ones return to our families, only to endure another day of uncertainty, fear and silence."

Together with the OSCE Secretary General and our partners, we are using every channel – public and private diplomacy – to press for their immediate release. We reiterate this call today: They must be released immediately.

Dear colleagues,

Through Helsinki+50 discussions, you reaffirmed that the Helsinki principles and the concept of comprehensive security remain valid and vital.

From these discussions, three conclusions stand out:

– The Helsinki principles must continue to guide the OSCE and future discussions on European security.

– The OSCE is a key forum for inclusive dialogue. Principles and commitments should frame the dialogue and efforts to ensure accountability.

– To respond effectively, the OSCE must modernize. The Helsinki+50 discussions have produced concrete proposals – some of them are already under implementation.

But we need to go further. The OSCE must undertake meaningful reform to remain fit for the next 50 years. I look forward to our lunch discussion today on this and propose progress be reviewed again in Lugano in 2026.

Colleagues,

Let me return to where I began: the principles.

In Ukraine, Russia is violating each of the Helsinki principles. I call on all of us to support Ukraine in achieving a just and lasting peace – as soon as possible. Because I am convinced that the way this war ends – and its legitimacy under international law and OSCE principles – will decisively shape the future of peace and stability across the OSCE area and beyond.

We can do better. We can be bolder.

Let us honour the spirit of Helsinki by strengthening the OSCE for decades to come. Let us defend the rules-based order – not only in words, but through actions. And let us ensure this Organization remains capable, credible and prepared to respond – today and in the future.

Thank you.

STATEMENT BY
THE DELEGATION OF DENMARK (ALSO ON BEHALF OF AUSTRIA, BELGIUM, BULGARIA, CROATIA, CYPRUS, CZECHIA, ESTONIA, FINLAND, FRANCE, GERMANY, GREECE, IRELAND, ITALY, LATVIA, LITHUANIA, LUXEMBOURG, MALTA, THE NETHERLANDS, POLAND, PORTUGAL, ROMANIA, SLOVAKIA, SLOVENIA, SPAIN AND SWEDEN)

(Annex 2 to MC(32) Journal of 4 and 5 December 2025)

Thank you, Chairperson,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the following European Union Member States: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain and Sweden.

The European Union expresses its gratitude to the Chairperson-in-Office, Foreign Minister Elina Valtonen, for her leadership in steering our Organization in challenging times. We also pay tribute to Ambassador Vesa Häkkinen and his entire team in Vienna for their tireless efforts in strengthening our Organization and maintaining its relevance. We also thank our host country, Austria, for the warm hospitality extended to all of us these days and for the overall support provided to the OSCE.

The 50th anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act, commemorated this year in Helsinki, Vienna, and many of our capitals, has reaffirmed its enduring relevance. The Helsinki principles and the concept of comprehensive security remain valid and vital to our common security. We reiterate that core principles – sovereignty, territorial integrity, peaceful settlement of disputes and each State's right to freely choose its own security arrangements – are shared obligations that are neither negotiable nor subject to reinterpretation. We welcome the overwhelming support expressed for the Helsinki principles during this Ministerial Council meeting.

We meet in Vienna at a critical moment for European and global security. Russia's ongoing war of aggression against Ukraine is a flagrant violation of international law and OSCE principles and commitments, and continues to inflict immense suffering, civilian casualties and destruction. The European Union remains steadfast in the commitment to a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in Ukraine, grounded in the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and international law. We reaffirm our continued and unwavering support for Ukraine's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders.

We also strongly support all efforts to preserve the Organization's continued engagement in and support to Ukraine. The OSCE leadership, executive structures and autonomous institutions must continue the Organization's assistance to Ukraine. We call for accountability for all international crimes and human rights violations and abuses, in the context of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine. The OSCE, through the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) and human dimension mechanisms, can continue to bring its valuable contribution. We remain deeply concerned about the fate of the

Ukrainian children deported to Russia or forcibly transferred within temporarily occupied Ukrainian territories. We welcome, therefore, the side event focused on the efforts to ensure their safe return to Ukraine, co-sponsored by the European Union and all European Union Member States.

We stand in solidarity with Moldova, facing serious repercussions of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine as a neighbouring country. The European Union remains committed to a peaceful, prosperous and resilient Moldova, and reaffirms its determination to support the Republic of Moldova in defending its sovereignty and territorial integrity in accordance with its constitution.

As many participating States have reaffirmed, the OSCE remains indispensable in promoting peace and stability across the region, as well as in supporting participating States in addressing a broad spectrum of risks and challenges that extend beyond military risks, such as cybersecurity, foreign information manipulation and interference, democratic backsliding, restrictions on civil society and independent media, and the security implications of climate change.

We commend the Civic Solidarity Platform for organizing its Parallel Civil Society Conference and value its contribution to the Ministerial Council through the Vienna Declaration. We reiterate the crucial role of civil society organizations and human rights defenders in promoting accountability and sustaining vibrant democracies.

The challenges in the OSCE area extend beyond its borders. It is therefore important to strengthen our partnerships with our Mediterranean and Asian Partners. The European Union has joined our Asian Partners in reaffirming that the security of the Euro-Atlantic and Indo-Pacific regions is interconnected.

The European Union supports efforts aimed at strengthening the OSCE's efficiency and functionality, as well as safeguarding its achievements, along with the collectively agreed principles and commitments on which it is built.

We use this opportunity to restate our unwavering support for the work and mandates of the OSCE field missions and autonomous institutions – the ODIHR, the Representative on Freedom of the Media and the High Commissioner on National Minorities. We emphasize that it is our shared responsibility to preserve their strong mandates, and guarantee their effective functioning and adequate budgets. We have supported Finland's efforts for the adoption of a Unified Budget for 2025 and we regret that consensus could not be reached. We call on all participating States to uphold the commitments they have made and provide the OSCE with adequate resources, enabling it to function effectively across its three dimensions and all its structures.

We also call upon all participating States to recognize the importance of providing the OSCE with continuity of its leadership. We look forward to progress on the appointment of the 2027 Chairmanship and express our full support to Cyprus' bid to lead the Organization.

We welcome the Finnish Chairmanship's focus on youth, peace and security, culminating in the OSCE-wide Road Map for Strengthening OSCE Efforts on Youth, Peace and Security just launched during the Ministerial Council meeting. The European Union and

all its European Union Member States have joined other participating States in acknowledging youth as important partners in peace and security.

Thanking again our Finnish colleagues, we look forward to working closely with the 2026 Chairmanship, Switzerland.

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

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

(Annex 3 to MC(32) Journal of 4 and 5 December 2025)

We, the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan, the Republic of Belarus, the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, the Russian Federation, the Republic of Serbia, the Republic of Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and the Republic of Uzbekistan,

Emphasizing the enduring significance for all humankind of the victory over Nazism in the Second World War and recalling in this regard that the year 2025 marks the 80th anniversary of the Great Victory,

Recognizing the importance of the outcome of the victory over Nazism in 1945 and of the judgments of the Nuremberg Tribunal intended to prevent a repetition of past mistakes and save the world from the scourge of war,

Noting with concern the spread of various extremist movements and ideologies of a racist and xenophobic nature, including neo-Nazism, which is not limited merely to the glorification of a movement that existed in the past, but represents a contemporary phenomenon whose adherents advocate ideas of national or racial superiority,

Drawing on the United Nations General Assembly resolution adopted on 17 December 2024 entitled "Combating glorification of Nazism, neo-Nazism and other practices that contribute to fuelling contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance",

Reaffirm our commitment to efforts aimed at preventing the revision or distortion of the outcome of the Second World War and the downplaying of the contribution of the peoples of the Soviet Union and of the liberation movements of European countries to the defeat of Nazism;

Express our intention to resolutely suppress activities aimed at glorifying the Nazi movement, rehabilitating former members of the Waffen-SS and their accomplices and denying the war crimes and crimes against humanity committed by them;

Are convinced of the importance of work with young people, above all in the information space, with a view to preventing the spread of the ideology of neo-Nazism and militant nationalism;

Consider it necessary to make use of all OSCE capabilities to combat the dissemination of ideas of racial superiority and manifestations of racism, xenophobia and related intolerance;

Call upon the OSCE Chairmanship-in-Office and the heads of the OSCE executive structures to give a proper assessment of manifestations of neo-Nazism and the glorification and rehabilitation of the Nazis and their accomplices;

Propose to consolidate international efforts aimed at preserving the historical memory of the Second World War and countering any manifestations of neo-Nazism.

STATEMENT BY
THE DELEGATION OF ROMANIA
(ALSO ON BEHALF OF MOLDOVA AND UKRAINE)

(Annex 4 to MC(32) Journal of 4 and 5 December 2025)

In the context of the debates of the OSCE Ministerial Council meeting held in Vienna on 4 and 5 December 2025, the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Moldova, Romania and Ukraine reaffirm their unwavering adherence to the principles of the Helsinki Final Act and to the principles and commitments of the OSCE.

Amidst Russia's aggression against Ukraine and the constant hybrid actions undertaken by Moscow in Moldova and Romania, as well as across Europe, we reaffirm our strong commitment to continue pursuing measures aimed at consolidating security and resilience in our region and beyond.

We reiterate our unwavering support to Ukraine's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders, extending to its territorial waters.

While Russia conducts combined strikes against Ukraine, its drone attacks also increasingly affect the security of other States, including through repeated violations of the airspace of Moldova and Romania. In this context, close co-ordination within bilateral and multilateral formats, including the "Odesa Triangle", remains a cornerstone of our joint efforts. Russia also increased its violations of Allied airspace, in response to which NATO launched "Eastern Sentry" and is strengthening Allied capabilities on the Eastern flank.

Our three countries will continue to deepen practical co-operation aimed at strengthening resilience in the region and beyond. We will further enhance co-ordination in countering hybrid threats from the Russian Federation, including disinformation and foreign information manipulation, cyberattacks and energy threats, and attempts to destabilize our societies through political or economic pressure. In light of Russia's intensified malicious activity in the digital space, we consider it important to advance our dialogue on the establishment of a trilateral cyber alliance.

Energy remains a key pillar of our co-operation. We will continue working together to strengthen the region's energy security, reduce vulnerabilities to external pressure, and counter Russia's ongoing weaponization of energy. By enhancing interconnectivity, improving resilience of energy systems, diversification of sources and ensuring stable and reliable supply routes, we aim to build a secure regional energy space resistant to any attempts at coercion or disruption.

Our countries will also continue close co-operation to prevent the circumvention of sanctions imposed on Russia. Ensuring that no covert channels, opaque ownership structures or any other schemes are used to undermine sanctions regimes is essential to our national and European security.

We underline the importance of expanding cross-border transport infrastructure as a strategic priority for our three countries. Ukraine welcomes the continued support of Romania and Moldova for the "solidarity lanes" initiative. Given Russia's ongoing attacks on

Ukraine's port infrastructure, it remains essential to further increase the capacity of transport corridors from Ukraine through Moldova and Romania in order to maintain the flow of goods, secure vital export routes, restore safety and freedom of navigation, and further strengthen regional co-operation among like-minded States.

We highlight the importance of the election of our three countries to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization Executive Board for the 2025–2029 term, which reflects our shared commitment to strengthening co-operation in education, science, culture and communication.

We remain firmly committed to advancing our European and Euro-Atlantic integration, reinforcing the Black Sea region as a space of peace, security and prosperity, and upholding the effectiveness and credibility of the OSCE as an important regional security organization.

In this spirit, we call on all OSCE participating States and institutions to support the Chairmanship-in-Office and the host country, Moldova, in ensuring the full, uninterrupted and effective functioning of the OSCE Mission to Moldova, in strict accordance with existing procedures and with full respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Moldova. Noting that the relevant OSCE Istanbul Summit 1999 commitments remain unfulfilled, we urge the Russian Federation to fully, unconditionally withdraw all military forces, ammunition and equipment stationed on the territory of Moldova.

United in purpose and united in action, Moldova, Romania and Ukraine will continue to stand together against Russia's aggression and to work jointly to protect their citizens.

Moldova, Romania and Ukraine request that this statement be attached to the journal of this Ministerial Council meeting.

I thank you.

STATEMENT BY
THE DELEGATION OF FRANCE
(ALSO ON BEHALF OF ALBANIA, ANDORRA, AUSTRIA, BELGIUM, BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA, BULGARIA, CANADA, CYPRUS, CZECHIA, DENMARK, ESTONIA, FINLAND, GERMANY, GREECE, ICELAND, LATVIA, LIECHTENSTEIN, LITHUANIA, LUXEMBOURG, MALTA, MOLDOVA, MONTENEGRO, THE NETHERLANDS, NORWAY, POLAND, PORTUGAL, SAN MARINO, SLOVENIA, SWEDEN, SWITZERLAND AND THE UNITED KINGDOM)

(Annex 5 to MC(32) Journal of 4 and 5 December 2025)

Mr. Chairperson,
Dear Ministers,
Ambassadors and delegates,

I am delivering this statement on behalf of the following participating States that are members of the Informal Group of Friends on the Safety of Journalists: Austria, Canada, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Greece, Latvia, Lithuania, Montenegro, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, the United Kingdom and my own country, France.

The following countries have aligned themselves with this statement: Albania, Andorra, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czechia, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Malta, Moldova, Poland, Portugal, San Marino, Slovenia and Switzerland.

Media freedom is an essential element of the OSCE's comprehensive concept of security. A free, independent and pluralistic media environment strengthens democratic governance, promotes transparency and accountability and contributes to war prevention, societal resilience and the enjoyment of all human rights. The ability of journalists and media actors to operate without undue interference, censorship, intimidation or violence is fundamental to safeguarding the public's right to seek, receive and impart information, as enshrined in the OSCE participating States' commitments.

The participating States have repeatedly affirmed these obligations in key OSCE documents, including the Helsinki Final Act, the Copenhagen Document and Ministerial Council Decision No. 3/18 on the safety of journalists, which underscore the vital role of free and independent media in fostering open societies and upholding the rule of law. These commitments require States to ensure legal and practical conditions that protect freedom of expression, promote media pluralism, improve the safety of journalists, end impunity for crimes against journalists and prevent the misuse of legislation or the judicial system to silence dissenting voices or restrict independent reporting.

It is with deep regret that we observe a stark contrast between the commitment of certain participating States to end impunity for crimes against journalists and actual practice. Rather than investigating and prosecuting those who assault, threaten or kill journalists, we are witnessing an increasing number of cases in various participating States where the judicial and penal systems are turned against journalists themselves, while attacks against

them go unpunished. Journalism has turned into a high-risk profession, and we must not allow this situation to be normalized and deteriorate even further. Even in the face of legitimate national security concerns, legal instruments should under no circumstances be misused to suppress independent media and to persecute journalists and other media actors.

Among the serious consequences of Russia's unprovoked and unjustifiable war of aggression against Ukraine is the deterioration of the situation with regard to the media in the context of the war. Since the beginning of the war, a significant number of journalists have been killed or subjected to arbitrary detention, torture and enforced disappearance by the Russian aggressor. Credible reports indicate that media infrastructure and media workers have become direct targets. Intentional attacks against civilians and civilian objects, as well as indiscriminate attacks, may constitute flagrant violations of international humanitarian law or even war crimes. Under international humanitarian law, journalists must be protected (as civilians). We call upon the Russian Federation to immediately and unconditionally release all media professionals imprisoned for their professional activities, including in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine.

In Russia itself and in Belarus, the situation is also alarming. Media actors face a repressive environment where media freedom no longer exists. Numerous journalists have been harassed, attacked and imprisoned for their professional activities on politically motivated charges. The Russian and Belarusian authorities have expanded and misused so-called anti-extremism and anti-terrorism laws to punish those who legitimately exercise their rights to freedom of expression, peaceful assembly and association. State-sponsored disinformation, censorship and foreign information manipulation and interference have a profound effect on media freedom. The systematic and ongoing repression of independent media in Russia and Belarus has severely curtailed all forms of independent journalism.

Journalists have been arrested, prosecuted and convicted in a number of other countries, including Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Türkiye and Uzbekistan. In Turkmenistan, the space for independent journalism is very limited. In Georgia, once a regional leader in media freedom, the authorities have taken to undermining independent journalism through harassment, intimidation, legislation and judicial action, as well as through the arbitrary detention of media actors.

We remain deeply concerned about the erosion of media freedom in other parts of the OSCE area. We are seeing increasing violence and hostility towards the media in public spaces, a lack of adequate response from security officials and an unwillingness on the part of police forces to protect journalists and media actors. In some instances, it seems that media professionals have even been attacked by law enforcement officials, with reports of deliberate physical assaults, harassment, seizure and destruction of professional equipment and even arbitrary detention.

In this context, the mandate of the Representative on Freedom of the Media takes on its true meaning: to serve as an early warning mechanism, to respond quickly in cases of serious non-compliance with OSCE commitments on media freedom, and to assist States in improving media laws and practices.

We commend the work of the Representative on Freedom of the Media in promoting the safety of women journalists. Last week marked the tenth anniversary of the Safety of Female Journalists Online (SOFJO) project. We welcome this project as an important activity

of the Office of the Representative on Freedom of the Media. By addressing the threat of gender-based online violence faced by women in the media, this project has contributed to a safer and more inclusive online environment for women journalists through the SOFJO Resource Guide, the Guidelines for monitoring online violence against female journalists, and a specific capacity-building programme tailored to the needs of various stakeholders.

Mr./Madam Chairperson,
Dear Ministers,
Ambassadors and delegates,

Freedom of the media, including the safety of journalists, is not only essential for States to uphold their human rights obligations, but also a cornerstone of sustainable security and stability throughout the OSCE area. We urge participating States to fully implement their commitments, strengthen institutional safeguards for independent journalism and support the efforts of the Representative on Freedom of the Media in this regard.

I request that this statement be recorded and attached to the journal of the day.

STATEMENT BY
THE DELEGATION OF BELARUS
(ALSO ON BEHALF OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION)

(Annex 6 to MC(32) Journal of 4 and 5 December 2025)

The Republic of Belarus and the Russian Federation,

Express their commitment to the fundamental principles of the Structured Dialogue on the current and future challenges and risks to security in the OSCE area, as enshrined in the OSCE Ministerial Council document "From Lisbon to Hamburg: Declaration on the Twentieth Anniversary of the OSCE Framework for Arms Control";

Believe in the inviolability of the fundamental elements of this dialogue mechanism, including the sovereign equality of participating States, the non-discriminatory format of work involving all 57 participating States, and the principle of adopting decisions by consensus in accordance with the Rules of Procedure of the OSCE;

Reaffirm their commitment to the principles proposed by the Chairpersons of the Informal Working Group on the Structured Dialogue between 2017 and 2021, which should guide the Group's work:

– Transparency;

– Collective ownership and the responsibility of participating States to advance the Dialogue;

– Inclusiveness and the involvement of all participating States in the Dialogue;

– Constructiveness and respect for the differences in opinions, priorities and concerns of all participating States.

These principles can only be applied if the Structured Dialogue is open to all 57 participating States.

In view of the consultations being held under the Norwegian Chairmanship in the framework of the Informal Working Group on the Structured Dialogue, we consider the diversion of the format's work to so-called small groups to be a mistake. In accordance with the Rules of Procedure of the OSCE, all informal working groups are open-ended bodies, and all their activities must be open to all participating States without exception. Continuing a policy of fragmenting the Structured Dialogue risks deepening the existing divisions and destroying the remnants of collegial work within the OSCE.

We do not deny the importance of informal exchanges of views on Structured Dialogue issues and of maintaining channels of communication that help to reduce risks and build mutual understanding. At the same time, we are convinced that any serious, results-oriented discussion on the politico-military aspects of security is only possible in a format involving all 57 participating States and must be based on the following principles:

– Commitment to the development of equal and mutually beneficial inter-State relations;

– The absence of an alternative to the principle of equal and indivisible security whereby no State, group of States or organization may strengthen its security at the expense of the security of others;

– Compliance with international law based on the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations in their entirety and interrelatedness;

– The unacceptability of sanction restrictions, dividing lines and double standards;

– The establishment of a de-ideologized pragmatic dialogue to discuss current challenges and the joint search for balanced solutions;

– The elimination of the root causes of the crisis in the OSCE area and the fundamental differences in the field of security, and the development of mutually acceptable mechanisms for maintaining the sustainability of a future model of peaceful coexistence on the basis of the mutual consideration of interests.

We call upon the Chairmanship of the Informal Working Group on the Structured Dialogue to refrain from discriminatory practices that contravene the Rules of Procedure of the OSCE and to bring this platform back to a professional, mutually respectful and depoliticized dialogue based on the principle of inclusiveness, with a view to overcoming the divisions within the OSCE.

This statement is open for alignment by other OSCE participating States.

STATEMENT BY
THE DELEGATION OF ESTONIA
(ALSO ON BEHALF OF DENMARK, FINLAND, ICELAND, LATVIA, LITHUANIA, NORWAY AND SWEDEN)

(Annex 7 to MC(32) Journal of 4 and 5 December 2025)

Mr. Chairperson,

I am delivering this statement on behalf of the following participating States: Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Sweden and my own country, Estonia.

Over the past year, the democratic backsliding in Georgia has intensified dramatically and it is with great concern that we have witnessed the Georgian authorities continue to take steps away from their international commitments, including those undertaken at the OSCE.

These include: excessive use of force against individuals exercising their freedom of expression and assembly, accompanied by a persistent failure by the Georgian authorities to investigate allegations of violence and hold those responsible to account; growing repression of citizens, civil society actors, independent media and journalists, including the enactment of sweeping legislative initiatives that have increased administrative detention periods, imposed fines for peaceful protest activities and introduced new and vaguely defined criminal provisions penalizing actions such as “insulting” officials; as well as the targeting of political opposition, including legal initiatives aimed at banning political parties and imprisoning opposition leaders.

Further, we regret that an invitation by the Georgian authorities to the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights for election observation of the recent local elections was issued less than a month before election day, leaving insufficient time to ensure credible and meaningful observation, and thereby depriving the Georgian people of an impartial, transparent and comprehensive assessment.

Mr. Chairperson,

As OSCE participating States, we have committed to upholding and defending fundamental human rights, democracy and the rule of law across our region. As agreed in the 1991 Moscow Document, third-dimension commitments are matters of direct and legitimate concern to all participating States and do not belong exclusively to the internal affairs of the State concerned.

It is within this spirit that we, as part of a wider group of States, have sought to engage in dialogue with the Georgian authorities and encourage a return to the path of respect for human rights and democratic norms and values, in line with our shared OSCE commitments. It is with regret that we note that these efforts have so far proved futile. On the contrary, we have seen the Georgian authorities’ pushback against the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office for observing a peaceful demonstration during a visit intended to facilitate dialogue with all actors in Georgia and reiterate the OSCE institutions’ readiness to support Georgia in the implementation of its commitments on fundamental freedoms and the rule of law.

Nevertheless, we will continue to press for meaningful and inclusive dialogue within Georgia and for tangible steps towards upholding our OSCE principles and commitments, including by demanding an end to politically motivated prosecutions and the release of opposition leaders and others detained on such grounds. We will continue to call on the Georgian authorities to refrain from acts that would further shut down the democratic space, and we stress the need to uphold the independence of the judiciary and to ensure the right to a fair trial. And, we will continue to explore, together with like-minded participating States, appropriate OSCE avenues to ensure that human rights violations are objectively documented and addressed.

We call on the Georgian authorities to engage with the OSCE executive structures in good faith and to take full advantage of the support they offer, in order to implement Georgia's international commitments, including those undertaken at the OSCE, in a comprehensive and non-selective manner.

Finally, we reiterate our solidarity with the Georgian people and their pursuit of a democratic, peaceful and European future.

Thank you.

STATEMENT BY
THE DELEGATION OF SERBIA

(Annex 8 to MC(32) Journal of 4 and 5 December 2025)

Mr. Chairperson,

The delegation of the Republic of Serbia takes the floor to exercise its right of reply in relation to the remarks made earlier in the "Joint statement on human rights and fundamental freedoms", pertaining to our country.

The Republic of Serbia reaffirms its firm commitment to the protection and promotion of the human rights and fundamental freedoms of all individuals, in full accordance with democratic principles, the rule of law and our international obligations. The Government continues to engage in open and constructive dialogue with journalists, civil society organizations and academic institutions, while advancing measures to strengthen transparency, pluralism and the independence of institutions.

All citizens enjoy the right to peacefully assemble and express their views, whether supportive or critical of the Government. However, no democratic society can condone acts of violence presented under the guise of protest, nor disregard deliberate attempts to disrupt public order or undermine institutional stability. Interventions by the competent authorities were undertaken strictly within the bounds of the law and for the sole purpose of safeguarding public safety. Despite police actions being limited and restrained, targeting only those who damaged property or assaulted officers, more than 170 police officers have been injured.

The delegation of Serbia encourages all OSCE participating States to engage on the basis of verified facts, constructive dialogue and mutual respect. We remain open to continued co-operation with national and international partners in further strengthening democratic institutions and promoting human rights. In line with Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights recommendations, we continue to improve the overall media framework and select Regulatory Authority for Electronic Media (REM) members transparently.

In this context, we caution against unsubstantiated interpretations or narratives that may diminish the efforts and progress that Serbia continues to achieve. The OSCE should not become a platform for unobjective or politically motivated intrusions into the domestic matters of participating States.

Dear colleagues,

Our goal remains clear: the preservation of democracy, the rule of law and the return to a peaceful social cycle. That is why we continue to call for dialogue with all stakeholders, including representatives of the protesters. Serbia aspires to remain a place where political differences are resolved within institutions, not on the streets, where freedom and security are equally protected, and where the future of all citizens rests on stability and the respect of democratic values.

We kindly ask this statement to be attached to the journal of the day.

Thank you.

STATEMENT BY
THE DELEGATION OF AZERBAIJAN

(Annex 9 to MC(32) Journal of 4 and 5 December 2025)

Mr. Chairperson,

In view of the claims made by Denmark and France concerning my country, in the statements delivered on behalf of a group of States, I would like to exercise the right of reply:

First of all, freedom of the media in Azerbaijan is guaranteed in the framework of the Constitution and the relevant national legislation. More than 5,000 online and printed media outlets operate freely in the country.

No journalist or media representative is being imprisoned for performing their professional duties in Azerbaijan. Legal proceedings are undertaken strictly in response to violation of national legislation not related to media, in full compliance with due process and the rule of law.

Furthermore, thousands of non-governmental organizations function openly and independently, benefiting, among others, from various government support mechanisms that facilitate their activities.

We recall challenges and problems for civil society and media in the countries on whose behalf the statements have been made. We do not wish to go into the details of those issues, as they are well known. But they underscore that discussions on these matters must be approached with balance and self-reflection and without double standards.

Therefore, we invite these States to devote greater attention to the concerns related to media freedom and civil society within their own jurisdictions.

We are ready to engage in constructive discussions on the implementation of human dimension commitments in all participating States.

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

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

STATEMENT BY
THE DELEGATION OF FINLAND
(ALSO ON BEHALF OF MALTA AND SWITZERLAND)

(Annex 10 to MC(32) Journal of 4 and 5 December 2025)

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

On 3 December, the OSCE Troika ministers made the following statement on the Helsinki+50 discussions on the future of the OSCE.

Throughout 2025, Finland, supported by the OSCE Troika, has conducted the Helsinki+50 discussions on the future of the OSCE, engaging all participating States, Partners for Co-operation, OSCE executive structures, the Parliamentary Assembly, and civil society representatives. These discussions have been held in a challenging context, which continues to be marked by Russia's illegal war of aggression against Ukraine, a grave and unprecedented violation of the OSCE's principles.

The aim of the Helsinki+50 discussions has been to ensure that the OSCE continues to deliver on its core mandates, firmly anchored in the Helsinki principles. At the same time, the Helsinki+50 discussions have provided a useful avenue for discussing OSCE reform.

The OSCE Troika echoes the main conclusions from the Helsinki+50 discussions:

– The Helsinki principles and the concept of comprehensive security remain valid and vital to our common security. They must continue to guide the OSCE and future discussions on European security;

– The OSCE continues to serve as a valued forum for inclusive dialogue. Accountability for violations of principles and commitments remains a fundamental task. States should continue to explore new formats for respectful, substantive dialogue, building on the Finnish Chairmanship's experiences this year;

– To remain effective and relevant, the OSCE needs to modernize. A swift adoption of a budget is essential for any modernization efforts to succeed. Many proposed functionality improvements do not require consensus. Measures could include medium-term strategic plans by the executive structures, as well as making full use of the Helsinki+50 Fund to support strategic management of extrabudgetary funds;

– Discussions on reforms requiring consensus should continue. States should continue working towards more ambitious reforms in line with the Helsinki+50 conclusions. These may include decoupling the post table from the budget, as well as agreeing on biannual budget allotments and more sustainable fallback options in the absence of a budget. A system of rotating Chairmanships may also be considered.

Mr. Chairperson,

In the current challenging circumstances, the OSCE Troika will continue to focus on the future of our Organization beyond 2025 with the ambition to achieve tangible results by the next Ministerial Council meeting in 2026.

During the Helsinki+50 discussions, participating States called for more prioritization by the executive structures, focusing on the areas where the OSCE delivers unique value. The OSCE Troika stands ready to support these efforts, in close consultation with participating States and executive structures.

The principles enshrined in the Helsinki Final Act – including respect for the sovereignty of States, territorial integrity, the non-use of force, and respect for human rights – remain the foundation of our common security and form the basis for all our efforts.

Together, we share the responsibility to ensure that the OSCE is fully equipped to meet the challenges and opportunities of the next 50 years.

Mr. Chairperson, I would kindly ask you to attach this statement to the journal of the day.

STATEMENT BY
THE INCOMING CHAIRMANSHIP OF SWITZERLAND AT THE THIRTY-SECOND MEETING OF THE OSCE MINISTERIAL COUNCIL

(MC.DEL/38/25 of 5 December 2025)

Vice Minister,
Excellencies,
Colleagues,

Mr. Chairperson,

Let me begin by expressing my sincere thanks to you and the whole Finnish Chairmanship team for your leadership throughout this year. You have guided the OSCE with determination in a challenging and complex environment, ensuring that this Ministerial Council meeting could take place in a constructive and co-operative spirit. Switzerland deeply appreciates the professionalism, responsiveness and dedication that have marked your Chairmanship.

I would also like to thank our host country Austria, not only for its efforts with regards to this Ministerial Council meeting, including the use of this impressive Festsaal today, but also for its continued and steadfast support to our Organization, throughout this year and beyond.

This Ministerial Council meeting reminds us, once again, why this Organization remains essential. Even in times when our positions differ fundamentally, we continue to meet, to speak, and to listen. That willingness to remain engaged is the foundation of any progress we can hope to achieve. It sustains security and builds trust among participating States. The OSCE, with its inclusive structure and its consensus-based approach, remains a unique and irreplaceable platform for co-operation, co-ordination and collective action.

As Switzerland prepares to assume the Chairmanship in 2026, we do so with a strong sense of responsibility toward this shared platform. We approach this task guided by our long-standing principles of neutrality and respect for international law. But above all, we are committed to upholding the values that guide Switzerland: dialogue, security and trust. These principles will shape our engagement throughout the year.

Mr. Chairperson,

Yesterday, the incoming Chairperson, Minister for Foreign Affairs Ignazio Cassis, presented Switzerland's five thematic priorities for the Chairmanship: first, respect of the Helsinki principles, which also forms the basis for lasting peace in Ukraine. We have heard calls at this Ministerial Council meeting that this Organization should be ready to apply its tools to support an eventual settlement when requested by all parties.

Second, inclusive multilateral diplomacy. Our intention is to use this platform for dialogue with all its participants.

Third, anticipating technologies for a safe and humane future.

Fourth, democracy, rule of law and human rights.

Fifth, the OSCE's ability to act. We have heard the calls for reforms in this room loud and clear. As an incoming Chairmanship we are ready to pick up this ball. But we have to do it together as 57. Reforms should include clarifying and sharpening mandates, intensifying partnerships, and a clear focus on results.

To be able to implement reforms, this Organization first and foremost needs an adopted budget. I count on all of you to engage in the budget discussions in the weeks to come with a spirit of constructiveness and co-operation. We have to succeed.

I also call on participating States to treat the question of the 2027 Chairmanship with a high sense of urgency. The time for nomination of a consensus candidate as per the Porto Ministerial Council decision is pressing.

Mr. Chairperson,

The challenges before us are substantial. The war in Ukraine is raging, tensions persist in different parts of the OSCE area. Conflicts, humanitarian crises and political disagreements remind us that security cannot be provided by any one country alone. The OSCE exists precisely to allow all participating States to co-ordinate, communicate and act together. Let us do so. Switzerland will dedicate its Chairmanship to upholding this collective responsibility, ensuring that dialogue is maintained, that security frameworks are respected.

Switzerland is determined to work closely with all participating States and Partners for Co-operation, as well as with the OSCE's institutions and field operations, whose expertise and presence remain vital for people across the region. We will listen carefully, facilitate where we can, and promote solutions grounded in international law, in co-operation, and in mutual respect. In doing so, we aim to strengthen the instruments of the Organization, to use the OSCE toolbox, to preserve its ability to act, and to ensure that it continues to serve peace, stability and human security effectively.

Mr. Chairperson,
Dear colleagues,

Switzerland looks forward to engaging with all delegations at the opening session of the Permanent Council on 15 January 2026, where we will present our programme in full and outline the year ahead. You have already received invitations for the first Chairmanship event, on combating anti-Semitism in the OSCE area, in February next year. We are grateful for your commitment to this topic.

Excellencies,

Switzerland assumes the Chairmanship with determination and a full understanding of the responsibilities it entails. We are committed to protecting the OSCE's role and to enhancing its tools and capacities.

We will engage with all delegations with openness, we will closely work with the Secretary General, with all OSCE executive structures, with the field operations, with its autonomous institutions, with the Parliamentary Assembly.

We are aware of the limits of a Chairmanship. While a Chairmanship can prepare, propose and facilitate, it is the participating States that take decisions. Hence the eventual success of any Chairmanship and the success of the OSCE is in your hands, in our hands.

You may count on Switzerland's full commitment for this Organization – but I count on yours. I look forward to our partnership to strengthen the OSCE and to strengthen security and co-operation in Europe.

I thank you.

III. REPORTS TO THE MINISTERIAL COUNCIL

REPORT BY
THE SECRETARY GENERAL TO THE
THIRTY-SECOND MEETING OF THE MINISTERIAL COUNCIL

(MC.GAL/19/25 of 4 December 2025)

Distinguished ministers,
Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen,

We meet at a critical moment. A few months ago, we marked the 50th anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act. We celebrated its transformative impact on our continent. We reminded ourselves of the decalogue of principles it enshrined. And we recalled that the main legacy of Helsinki is that "dialogue is always possible".

We are reminded of that in this room, today. Countries currently at war with each other sit in front of each other. Countries who have been at war for decades and are now building peace sit close to each other.

This is because, despite harmful attempts at dismissing dialogue as "useless", despite deliberate attempts to sideline this Organization and relegate it to history, the OSCE is and remains today the place we need once again to rebuild the shattered security architecture in Europe.

No other table has this inclusive membership. No other table has this history. No other table has this potential. And seize this potential we must.

Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen,

The European security architecture our forefathers and mothers have built over decades of hard work has crumbled before our eyes. It simply no longer holds.

And in no other place is this more visible than just a few hundred miles away from here – in Ukraine. The ongoing war remains an open wound in the heart of our continent. It has caused immense suffering, it must end. Thanks to renewed diplomatic efforts led by President Trump in recent months, I am confident it will end.

And when it ends, two things will be clear.

First, it will be in everyone's interest that, whatever agreement between the sides emerges, it should be implemented so that it holds. To hold, it will need to be just and credible. And for it to be credible, it will need to be monitored. If that time comes, and if the sides need us, the OSCE will be ready.

Second, we will need to address what this war has laid bare. The overall security architecture in Europe no longer holds. It will be in everyone's interest to build a system that endures, and that can prevent us from falling into the abyss of an arms race and endless escalation management, fraught with the risk of new confrontation.

We will need a new dialogue – honest, inclusive and forward looking – about how to rebuild the European security architecture.

To achieve this, we must be willing to ask the hard questions. When a system crumbles in the manner that we are witnessing right now, all participating States need to do some soul searching. A meaningful security discussion would need to include an honest assessment of what went wrong; what we condoned, which we should not have; and, what we underestimated. We need to go through that together, and listen to each other. Just like we did in the early 1970s.

For these tasks, I believe the OSCE is a key forum. It has the inclusivity, the legitimacy, the experience and the historical memory – to show that dialogue, engagement and co-operation are still possible, even and especially in the darkest times, even and especially with adversaries. And that is the only way to ensure comprehensive security for all.

OSCE staff in the Secretariat, field operations and institutions are showing this every day, in their work – be it in support of political dialogue, be it by bringing your State officials together across borders, to learn from each other and to develop common approaches to shared challenges. We continue to embody the spirit of "co-operative security" every day.

Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen,

This Organization is ready to once again serve its historic mission. But we are not in the 1970s or 1990s any more. We need to equip it with the tools and flexibility it needs to be an agile and efficient actor, in the fast-moving world of the twenty-first century.

In short, we need reforms. Substantial, courageous and effective reforms. To cut our costs and redirect our efforts and resources to what we do best and where we bring added value.

I am ready to play my part, and to put on the plate, for the Secretariat alone down the road, a 10 per cent reduction in costs – staff and other costs. It will be very difficult, but it will be done – by streamlining the internal structure, clear prioritization, merging what can be merged and cutting what is redundant.

We closed the Minsk structures in just three months – we know how to be efficient and effective. But the current rigid rules around budgeting and human resources simply do not allow us the flexibility to move resources internally. So I need to ask for your support to decouple the post table from the budget, which will enable us to cut costs.

You would retain the authority to determine the number of posts and at what level, but we need the authority to determine, within the Secretariat, within the institutions and within the field operations, where to deploy our staff.

That's all I ask, and this is not just my request: all heads of field operations and institutions have asked the very same, as they face the same challenge. This simple decision alone will unlock the reform potential of this Organization. It will result in lower costs and more efficient structures, with the flexibility to deploy resources where they are needed the most, and where the added value is greater. This is already a very cost efficient and lean

Organization, and the present fiscal challenge may, paradoxically, make us stronger, if provided with the tools to seize the opportunity.

Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen,

I am not suggesting the path before us will be easy. What I am saying is – it's possible. It is possible to bring an end to the war in Ukraine. It is possible to sustain and support the implementation of the agreement the sides may reach. And it is possible to relaunch a proper dialogue on the future European security architecture.

We faced another moment of global existential threat – in the early 1970s – that led to the Helsinki Final Act and the framework we still work within today. We may be at a threshold of another such moment.

Let us recall that this Organization was born at a time when the threat of mutually assured destruction was at the forefront of everyone's mind. Frankly, these capabilities have only increased since 1975. In recent years, we have seen irresponsible nuclear rhetoric. That is unacceptable. Let us not forget – "A nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought". Let us not play with fire.

Distinguished ministers,
Colleagues, ladies and gentlemen,

Security cannot, and will never be, guaranteed by military deterrence alone. Deterrence is essential, but alone it can lead to an arms race with destabilizing consequences for all. Security and peace must be ensured also through co-operation, which requires dialogue, to reduce risks, to manage crises, to ensure military transparency, verification mechanisms and arms control.

That is the living legacy of Helsinki. And our historic responsibility.

I thank you.

LETTER FROM THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE FORUM FOR SECURITY CO-OPERATION TO THE MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF FINLAND, CHAIRPERSON OF THE THIRTY-SECOND MEETING OF THE MINISTERIAL COUNCIL OF THE OSCE

(MC.GAL/12/25 of 1 December 2025)

As Chairperson of the Forum for Security Co-operation (FSC), it is my honour to inform you about the Forum's work in 2025.

In preparing this letter, I have consulted the other 2025 FSC Chairmanships, namely Spain and Estonia.

This year marks the fourth consecutive year of FSC operations under the extraordinary security circumstances caused by the ongoing, unjustified and unprovoked war of aggression launched by Russia against Ukraine on 24 February 2022. The war continues to undermine the European and global security architecture and threatens the very foundations of the OSCE's concept of co-operative security. In 2025, all three FSC Chairmanships maintained unwavering support for Ukraine as a central element of their programmes, emphasizing that Russia must be held accountable for its actions. In close co-ordination with the Chairperson of the Permanent Council and the OSCE Secretariat, the FSC has continued to serve as a mandated platform for dialogue, focusing on addressing current security challenges while safeguarding the integrity of the Forum.

As this year the OSCE marked the 50-year anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act, the FSC Chairmanships recognized the more urgent than ever need for upholding the OSCE's principles as well as continuous support to a peaceful resolution of Russia's ongoing war of aggression against Ukraine. All three opening sessions, with the participation of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Spain, H.E. Mr. J. M. Albares Bueno, the Secretary General of the Estonian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, H.E. Mr. J. Vseviov, and the Minister of Defence of Finland, H.E. Mr. A. Häkkänen, conveyed a strong message of unwavering support for Ukraine. They also called for the restoration of dialogue within the FSC, as well as for the responsible conduct of affairs across the OSCE area and beyond.

The FSC plenary meetings served as a platform for exchanging views on Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine. In total, seven Security Dialogues were held, and four joint meetings of the FSC and the Permanent Council. Regrettably, one planned Security Dialogue was blocked by Russia and subsequently had to be held as a Chairperson's side event.

All three FSC Chairmanships of 2025 prioritized the topics of responsibility and accountability in the military sphere. The FSC Chairmanship of Spain organized a Security Dialogue on "Responsible military use of new and emerging technologies"; the FSC Chairmanship of Estonia held a Security Dialogue on "The OSCE Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security: Democratic control of armed and security forces"; and the FSC Chairmanship of Finland organized a Security Dialogue on "Resilience through comprehensive security".

A joint meeting of the FSC and the Permanent Council under the Estonian Chairmanship was dedicated to the protection of children in armed conflicts. The Finnish Chairmanship organized two joint meetings of the FSC and the Permanent Council: one on the violation of Estonian airspace by the Russian Federation, and another Security Dialogue on "Helsinki Final Act 50 years".

The Finnish FSC Chairmanship organized the OSCE Code of Conduct seminar on military commanders' responsibility and accountability in conducting military operations in Helsinki. The seminar addressed international humanitarian law and command responsibility in the context of conducting joint targeting in military operations.

All three FSC Chairmanships prioritized the implementation of the women, peace and security agenda and UN Security Council resolution 1325. The FSC Chairmanship of Spain organized a joint FSC-Permanent Council Security Dialogue entitled "Towards women's equal and full participation in peace and security governance". The Estonian Chairmanship held a Security Dialogue on "The role of women in strengthening defence and ensuring resilience". Under the Finnish Chairmanship, a side event on sexual and gender-based violence as a weapon of war was convened as an alternative to a blocked Security Dialogue. To complement the side event, a screening of the documentary *He Came Back* by the *Kyiv Independent* was organized.

On the margins of the Annual Security Review Conference, the Estonian Chairmanship organized a side event on men's role in countering unconscious bias. The Estonian Chairmanship organized also a side event on hybrid warfare in the OSCE area. To mark the 25-year anniversary of United Nations Security Council resolution 1325, Finland hosted an FSC Chairperson's event on "25 years of United Nations Security Council resolution 1325: Perspectives on the four pillars of the women, peace and security agenda". In conjunction with the event, the exhibition "Arm women now" showcased the extraordinary resilience of Ukrainian servicewomen in the face of Russia's brutal war of aggression against Ukraine.

All three FSC Chairmanships continued to support the OSCE's work in the politico-military dimension of security on practical assistance in the area of small arms and light weapons (SALW) and stockpiles of conventional ammunition (SCA) controls. On the margins of the 2025 Annual Security Review Conference, the Estonian FSC Chairmanship organized a side event on the review of the SALW and SCA assistance projects in South-Eastern Europe. Furthermore, the Finnish FSC Chairmanship held: two events on the progress of SALW/SCA assistance projects' implementation to inform participating States on the achievements and lessons learned; and a meeting on the role of SALW control in the conflict cycle to exchange among subject-matter experts from other international organizations on lessons learned and good practices from South-Eastern and Eastern Europe.

The OSCE's assistance projects on SALW and SCA continued to provide steady support in 2025 with a portfolio of 19 assistance projects worth 66.5 million euros. A significant element of the projects was providing support to efforts to combat illicit trafficking in SALW across the OSCE area. The assistance projects in Central Asia continuously provided support to counter the threat and risk of SALW, ammunition and explosives trafficking, as well as to strengthen the life-cycle management of conventional ammunition. In Ukraine, the OSCE, together with other international partners, provided advisory support in drafting the SALW control strategy, and participated in capacity-building

activities for the law enforcement agencies through training and the exchange of good practices to combat illicit trafficking in weapons, ammunition and explosives. Under a regional programme in South-Eastern Europe, the OSCE rolled out SALW deactivation activities and delivered regional canine Frontex-certified trainings.

Furthermore, throughout the year, the FSC Chairmanships supported the 2025 OSCE Scholarship for Peace and Security training programme on conflict prevention and resolution through arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation for youth, especially women; the 2025 edition received a record number of applications – the most since its inception.

The military information exchange remained at a high rate, with some participating States deciding to continue not exchanging information at all or not providing it to all participating States in light of the current security situation. The OSCE Information Management and Reporting System (iMARS) was successfully launched providing real-time military data analysis for participating States. In 2025, all monthly and quarterly confidence- and security-building measures implementation reports issued by the OSCE Conflict Prevention Centre were generated based on iMARS.

The FSC Chairmanships commend the work of the Conflict Prevention Centre in developing the FSC E-learning Programme, consisting of 23 modules that cover topics related to the conduct of FSC plenary meetings, arms control, military information exchanges, and UN Security Council resolutions 1325 and 1540, in English and Russian. Overall, 950 participants from 51 participating States have participated in the FSC E-learning modules so far.

The panellists providing expertise for the Security Dialogues in 2025 were comprised of 57 per cent women experts and 43 per cent men. In 2025, on average 34 per cent women and 66 per cent men participated in the FSC plenaries, which the FSC Chairmanships note is a 3 per cent increase in women’s participation compared to the previous year.

In conclusion, against the security challenges in the region and the unprecedented deterioration of a constructive approach at the FSC, the Forum remains committed to serving as an important platform for dialogue and decision-making in the first dimension, providing participating States with an opportunity to discuss politico-military security issues, raise security concerns, and hold each other accountable for adherence to the OSCE principles and implementation of their commitments.

REPORT ON THE CLOSURE OF THE MINSK PROCESS, THE PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVE OF THE OSCE CHAIRPERSON-IN-OFFICE ON THE CONFLICT DEALT WITH BY THE OSCE MINSK CONFERENCE AND THE HIGH-LEVEL PLANNING GROUP

(MC.GAL/17/25 of 2 December 2025)

1. Introduction

Pursuant to Ministerial Council Decision No. 1/25 (MC.DEC/1/25) of 1 September 2025, the OSCE Secretariat was tasked with implementing the closure of the OSCE Minsk Process, the Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office on the Conflict Dealt with by the OSCE Minsk Conference (PRCiO) and the High-Level Planning Group (HLPG) (hereinafter referred to collectively as the "Minsk structures") no later than 1 December 2025.

On 1 September 2025, the Secretary General issued to the PRCiO and HLPG a closure implementation plan to guide their closure in an orderly, responsible, prompt and cost-effective manner, while ensuring a co-ordinated and efficient process in compliance with the OSCE's Common Regulatory Management System (CRMS). As the Minsk Process did not have any contractual obligations (no premises, assets or staff on the OSCE payroll), its closure was formalized through MC.DEC/1/25 and the discontinuation of related costs.

The closure of the PRCiO and HLPG was concluded on 30 November 2025. This covered: human resources, assets, premises, information and communications technology (ICT), budget and finance (including service contracts), records management and internal and external communication.

The closure budget for the Minsk structures was 609,445 euros as per CIO.GAL/102/25, reviewed by the Advisory Committee on Management and Finance on 20 August 2025 and referred to in MC.DEC/1/25.

2. Human resources

The closure involved the separation of 18 personnel – 13 in the PRCiO (2 seconded posts, 11 General Services (GS) contracted posts) and 5 in the HLPG (4 seconded posts and 1 GS contracted post) with payment of applicable entitlements, such as termination indemnity, leave encashment, Provident Fund payments, etc. All personnel were employed until 30 November 2025 to ensure sufficient on-site human resources in support of an orderly and timely closure process.

The Secretariat organized several townhall meetings with personnel in the affected structures to share information, answer questions, hear concerns and address them to the extent allowed by the regulatory framework and comparable practice of previous closures of other executive structures.

Throughout the process of closure, the Secretariat ensured the continued availability of psychosocial care for personnel, and additional support was made available through the OSCE-contracted health insurance provider.

The Secretariat also designed and delivered a tailored programme of career transition training opportunities (e.g., job interview skills, project management) for closure-affected personnel. Training was delivered by the Secretariat both in-person (Tbilisi, from 28 to 31 October) and online.

3. Assets

A total of 392 assets were disposed of as part of the closure process. Assets included, *inter alia*, vehicles and spare parts, ICT equipment, and furniture.

The internal transfer to other executive structures or external disposal of assets were carried out in accordance with the CRMS. One hundred and two assets were transferred within the OSCE, 62 assets were sold, 111 assets were donated, and 117 obsolete assets were destroyed. The sale of assets generated approximately 100,000 euros.

The Secretariat provided on-site asset disposal support to the PRCiO from 3 to 12 November, and it repeatedly visited the HLPG office. Cross-border transfer of assets and other closure operations were facilitated through the issuance of notes verbales to relevant participating States.

Limited residual activities related to the internal transfer of some PRCiO assets to other executive structures and ongoing shipping of PRCiO records and assets to Vienna are being finalized by the Secretariat.

4. Information and communications technology

A full ICT backup of locally stored digital data/systems was performed and the backup media transferred to the Secretariat, which provided throughout sequenced termination and shutdown of data centres, services and ICT equipment. Due consideration was given to OSCE information security, including disconnection from the OSCE corporate network of affected executive structures and secure wiping of ICT equipment, as well as business continuity, with critical services run out of the Vienna-based data centre.

5. Premises

The PRCiO leased premises in Tbilisi, Yerevan and Baku, while the HLPG had an office in Vienna. All premises were inspected, prepared for handover and returned to the owners in line with the applicable termination modalities.

No repair work or other services were required prior to handover.

6. Budget and finance

The main elements of the closure budget included in CIO.GAL/102/25 as referred to in MC.DEC/1/25 relate to staff costs and associated indemnities in accordance with the

CRMS, and costs related to asset management, the closure of office premises and records management activities.

In the absence of an adopted Unified Budget 2025, the financing for the closure of affected Minsk structures continued to be based on provisional arrangements, in accordance with Financial Regulation 3.04.

All payments and claims made and/or cleared by the PRCiO and the HLPG by the end of the closure period were preceded by a review of service and other contracts with regard to expiration and termination provisions to ascertain any unfulfilled obligations or potential claims. Consequently, the PRCiO and the HLPG, in co-ordination with the Secretariat, terminated service and other contracts.

The actual cost of the closure for both the PRCiO and the HLPG did not exceed the closure budget estimates as contained in CIO.GAL/102/25.

The PRCiO bank account was closed on 28 November 2025 with the remaining funds transferred to the Secretariat, while the HLPG did not have its own bank account, as it relied on the Secretariat. Any final payments that may be needed for residual administrative actions will be made by the Secretariat.

Once all payments and claims are concluded, the Secretariat will settle any outstanding unliquidated obligations and return all unspent funds to participating States through the annual Unified Budget cash surplus. This will be reported as part of the Financial Statements.

7. Records management

Both the PRCiO and the HLPG, in collaboration with the Secretariat, prepared an inventory of paper and digital records by locations and volumes to determine cleaning, preparation and transfer needs. Records management pertaining to the Minsk Process was limited in scope and was handled directly by the Secretariat.

The respective mandates of the affected structures in conjunction with their file plan and retention schedule were the basic guidelines for the retention, transfer and preservation of all records, including the identification of records of vital and historical value. Files whose retention had not expired and those to be retained in the Secretariat were stored in Vienna in the intermediate archive repository, while historical records will be sent to the Documentation Centre in Prague via the Secretariat for long-term preservation.

The PRCiO’s records amounted to a volume of 15.5 linear metres, while the HLPG’s records amounted to a volume of 10 linear metres. An additional substantial volume of records was destroyed on site in compliance with OSCE retention rules and established disposal procedures.

The Secretariat provided on-site records management support to the PRCiO from 28 September to 4 October, and it repeatedly visited the HLPG office.

Records custodians within the Secretariat were assigned for all PRCiO, HLPG and Minsk Process records.

8. Internal and external communication

The Secretariat ensured internal communication through 16 weekly meetings of a planning and co-ordination group chaired by the Conflict Prevention Centre and including relevant Secretariat departments, as well as PRCiO and HLPG representatives, held between 14 August and 27 November 2025.

Additional ad hoc meetings with specific Secretariat departments were held throughout the closure process as needed, to promote transparency and information-sharing with affected personnel and to co-ordinate more closely certain closure activities.

A first press release (SEC.PR/60/25) welcoming the 8 August Joint Declaration was published on 9 August 2025. This was followed by two press releases issued on 1 September and 1 December 2025 to mark the beginning and the end of the closure process of the Minsk Process, the PRCiO and the HLPG respectively (SEC.PR/61/25 and SEC.PR/71/25). The Secretariat responded to 18 media requests related to the closure of the Minsk Process, the PRCiO and the HLPG.

On 16 October 2025, the Secretariat reported to the Permanent Council on the state of play of the closure process of the Minsk structures through an oral update.

The Secretariat updated the relevant webpage of the Minsk Process, the PRCiO and the HLPG on the OSCE website as of 1 December 2025 to reflect their closure.