1581 Meeting of the Permanent Council
Vienna, 15 October 2026
Remarks by Secretary General Feridun H. Sinirlioğlu

Thank you, Mr. Chair,

Distinguished delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have followed your **budget discussions** this week. I heard you, and will try to take your comments into careful consideration as much as possible. But you should understand that, in the current volatile security environment, we need **more investment** in the OSCE – not less.

The ongoing discussions on the budget are an opportunity to talk about what kind of Organization you want for the future. We must ensure that we **do not weaken** the tools we will need to revisit and rebuild a better functioning security architecture in the future.

Distinguished delegates,

The **human toll** of the war in Ukraine is intolerable. And it continues to grow - day by day. We are seeing a **dangerous cycle of escalation**. In recent days, weeks and months, attacks have intensified. Behind every report of another attack are **people** whose lives are shattered in an instant. Families being torn apart. People losing their homes. Communities living under constant threat of further attacks. The humanitarian situation is further deteriorating. And **another winter** is approaching. Relentless attacks on civilian infrastructure threaten access to electricity, heating, water, and other essential services for millions of people.

The consequences of the war are increasingly felt across our region and beyond. Recent **attacks in the Black Sea** are further undermining maritime security and freedom of navigation. This jeopardizes **energy and food security**. Repeated airspace violations affecting neighbouring participating States, raise the risks of **miscalculation** and further escalation.

Distinguished delegates,

When escalation begins to seem inevitable, we risk becoming accustomed to it. This is how **a psychology of war** can take hold. We hear comments that an open war across Europe is being increasingly discussed as a possibility, rather than as something **to be avoided at all costs**. This is very dangerous. **The words and the tone** we use with each other matter. They shape how we see the choices before us. And they can affect the space we leave for **diplomacy**.

In moments like these, **multilateralism** and **diplomacy** remain **our most powerful tools** to reduce tensions, to manage risks in the context of mistrust, and to create conditions for the parties to reach a **negotiated settlement to end the war**.

Diplomacy cannot be undermined. It cannot be put at risk or **under threat**. At any time. Because that would serve no one's security.

We all have a responsibility to de-escalate tensions and support diplomatic engagement to bring this horrible war to an end through a negotiated settlement.

Dear colleagues,

It is now more than four years since three of our staff, - Vadym Golda, Maksym Petrov and Dmytro Shabanov - have been detained. I continue to personally and closely engage with both the Russian Federation and Ukraine to secure their freedom. Pursuing **every possible diplomatic** avenue to ensure that they are reunited with their families as soon as possible.

Thank you.