



OSCE Ministerial Council, 30 November 2023

Statement by H.E. Elina Valtonen,

Minister for Foreign Affairs of Finland

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Distinguished Chair – dear Bujar. Dear Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen.

While fully aligning with the statement of the EU, I make the following remarks in my national capacity.

We meet in extremely serious circumstances as Russia continues its brutal and violent war of aggression in Ukraine. Russia is not only blatantly violating the UN Charter, but also breaking the core principles and commitments of the European security order. Russia has been trying to subvert these basic principles for years, including in Georgia in 2008 and in Ukraine since 2014. These principles are neither negotiable nor subject to revision or re-interpretation. Russia's notions of spheres of influence or zero-sum-game have no place in Europe in the 2020's.

War and destruction is Russia's choice. It is important to remember that Russia could end this war at any time, and Russia alone is responsible for where we are now: facing another winter of war in Europe.

And already now we can say that Russia, who attacked with a quick victory in mind, has failed to defeat Ukraine. Ukrainians' resilience and bravery are admirable.

Mr Chair,

Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine has severely damaged the OSCE. I want express my sincere appreciation and gratitude to you, dear Bujar, and to your team, for your staunch leadership when faced with this challenge. Your team has worked hard to safeguard the future of this organisation.

We are very pleased that this week a consensus was found, and grateful for the leadership shown by Malta by stepping up for the chairpersonship in 2024. We are ready to support you by all possible means as a participating State and as a Troika member.

Yet the disruptive policies of Russia continue to sabotage the functionality of the OSCE. We need a decision on the top 4 positions, all of them.

Mr. Chair,

The OSCE contributes to promoting and upholding the rule of law, democracy and human rights, as well as conflict prevention and peace mediation in the OSCE region.

We should make full use of the OSCE toolbox across all three dimensions, in autonomous institutions and in OSCE field operations.

Without the political will and commitment to the OSCE of all participating states, this organization's potential is not fully realized. This organisation is only as effective as we, the participating States, allow it to be.

While our focus is on Russia's war against Ukraine, we should not lose sight of the valuable and concrete work that the organization does across the OSCE region. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the OSCE staff, in Vienna, in the autonomous institutions and field operations across the OSCE space, for the important work they carry out in difficult circumstances.

As Finland is preparing to assume the Chairpersonship in 2025, I want to stress our commitment to strengthen the rules-based order through reconfirming the Helsinki principles and to safeguard the OSCE to serve its purpose, promoting security in the OSCE region.

Thank you.