

STATEMENT ON FINNISH PRIORITIES

As delivered by ambassador Ellen Svendsen at the Permanent Council, Vienna, 19
September 2024

Thank you, Madame Chair.

A warm welcome also on behalf of Norway to Foreign Minister Elina Valtonen.

Norway fully supports Finland's priorities for the upcoming Chairpersonship. We welcome your focused and pragmatic strategy, and your commitment to explore innovative methods in preserving and strengthening the OSCE.

Let me also thank your professional teams both in Vienna and Helsinki for their dedication to ensuring this Organization's long-term effectiveness. We commend the inclusive and consultative approach Finland has adopted in preparing for its Chairpersonship, engaging extensively with stakeholders both in national capitals and in Vienna.

Furthermore, I would like to seize this opportunity to express our profound gratitude to the Maltese Chairmanship. Despite having only a short window to prepare, you have fully and diligently committed yourselves to resolving the institutional challenges of this organization. Without your unwavering leadership, we would not be positioned as we are today to make further progress.

Madame Chair/Foreign Minister,

We welcome Finland's clear focus on the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine in its chairpersonship. Russia's brutal war has upended the security landscape in Europe, causing instability and immense suffering, and posing the gravest threat to European security since the Second World War. Russia can and must end this war.

Ukraine, as a sovereign and independent state, has a fundamental right to determine its own foreign policy and security arrangements, fully in accordance with international law and the Helsinki Final Act.

The Helsinki Final Act reflects the resounding legacy of Finland in the OSCE. The transformative impact of the 1975 Helsinki Summit, which established "Helsinki" as

synonymous with diplomatic excellence, stands as one of the most influential benchmarks in international relations. This legacy symbolizes not only the balancing of great power interests but also underscores the significance of value-driven politics and the pivotal role of civil society in fostering change.

We meet at a time when the OSCE, designed to tackle multidimensional challenges, can only be effective if participating States support its institutions and missions with genuine political will. While consensus remains our organizing principle and guiding procedure, we must not let it become an impediment to effective action.

Looking ahead, we strongly welcome Finland's ambitious agenda for the 2025 Chairpersonship, in particular the strong emphasis resilience—both within the OSCE and among its participating States.

We hope that under your leadership, this Organization will strengthen its relevance both as a platform for political dialogue and as an effective actor in crisis management, reinforcing its role as a cornerstone of European security.

May 2025 be the year when we renew the Spirit of Helsinki.

Minister, you can rely on the unwavering support of Norway throughout your tenure.

Thank you.