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Delegation of Italy

**STATEMENT BY
AMBASSADOR STEFANO BALDI, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF
ITALY TO THE OSCE, AT THE 1419th MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

20 April 2023

**On the Secretary General's thematic report about the OSCE's activities on combating
trafficking in cultural property**

Mr. Chairperson,
Madam Secretary General,

While seconding the statement delivered by the European Union, I wish to express, in a national capacity as well, heartfelt thanks to the Secretary General for having brought to the Permanent Council's attention this thematic report on the OSCE's important work in combating trafficking in cultural property.

Italy attaches priority importance to this topic and is traditionally among the principal advocates of strengthening multilateral conventions dealing with illicit trafficking in cultural property, such as the 1970 UNESCO Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property and the 1995 UNIDROIT Convention on Stolen or Illegally Exported Cultural Objects.

In line with our commitment at the international level, we have led the way in promoting increased and constant attention to this grave transnational threat on the part of the OSCE as well.

Cultural heritage defines our identity as individuals and communities. It connects them to each other, fostering collective memory, reciprocal understanding and dialogue within and among our societies. The fight against trafficking in cultural property, on account of the complex international ramifications of such trafficking and its close links with international organized crime networks, corruption and money laundering, transcends the OSCE's three dimensions of security and contributes to the stability and security of our countries.

Combating trafficking in cultural property was a focus of our OSCE Chairmanship in 2018, and over the years Italy has promoted and strongly supported the Transnational Threats Department's efforts to raise awareness of the importance of this topic. Reflecting Italy's acknowledged international leadership in this field, the contribution of the Carabinieri Command for the Protection of Cultural Heritage and the Guardia di Finanza (Finance Police) has been particularly important in terms of defining the OSCE's

training activities. The creation of a team of international experts that can be deployed rapidly when needed is the latest important and much-appreciated initiative.

Deeply convinced of the added value brought by the OSCE and of its essential contribution to promoting international co-operation on combating trafficking in cultural property, I wish once again to thank the Secretary General and the Transnational Threats Department for the priority attention accorded to this topic and for the areas of work proposed with a view to strengthening further the OSCE's activities and its visibility in this field. The OSCE can count on Italy's continued and committed support.

Thank you.