

31st Meeting of the OSCE Ministerial Council, Valletta, 5-6 December 2024

Joint statement on Securing the OSCE's Future: Principles and Action

Excellencies, distinguished delegates,

1. As we convene today, Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine has inflicted immense suffering on countless individuals and strained the very foundations of security and cooperation that we strive to uphold. Russia, in launching its unprovoked war of aggression, has violated international law and failed to uphold OSCE commitments. It has further sought to destabilize and undermine the work of this organization by blocking key decisions.

2. We, the aligning states, Andorra, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Canada, Czechia, Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Moldova, Monaco, Montenegro, Netherlands, San Marino, Slovakia, Slovenia, Sweden, Switzerland, Ukraine, United Kingdom and United States of America, and my own country Norway, reaffirm our unwavering commitment to the principles of the Helsinki Decalogue and subsequent OSCE commitments. In these challenging times, the OSCE and its comprehensive approach to security, emphasizing democracy, rule of law, human rights, is more important than ever. The 12 OSCE field missions and the autonomous institutions demonstrate how the OSCE can make a tangible and valuable contribution to people's lives in the region - and to our comprehensive security. We strongly support their work and mandates.

3. We remain resolute in supporting the OSCE's functionality as a means to further protecting the OSCE principles and commitments. It is imperative to secure the effective implementation of the Organization's mandate. Only then can we safeguard its future. Only then can we restore an open and constructive dialogue and find much-needed solutions for the institutional challenges the OSCE is facing.

4. Consensus on the Helsinki Decalogue has underpinned our shared security for 50 years, and consensus decision-making has been integral to the OSCE since its inception. But consensus decision-making requires good faith. The consensus principle must not be misused or weaponized to undermine the work of the Organization.

5. The OSCE must be enabled to function. Participating States should therefore explore ways to sustain the organization's capacity to act. We are deeply concerned over the current stalemate in adopting the Unified Budget. The financial impasses threaten the Organization's effectiveness and credibility. Mandated meetings must proceed in all three dimensions and administrative decisions should not be politicized. Attempts to obstruct work by blocking the adoption of agendas hinder the OSCE's ability to fulfill its mandate for the benefit of all. In this regard, we recall the Budapest Summit decision of 1994 on the Chairmanship's overall responsibility for executive action and to ensure continuity and stability in the Organization's operations.

6. We further recognize the problem caused by unpaid contributions and the need to consider measures to ensure timely payment. We need to take steps to ensure the organization's resilience and ability to adjust to new realities. One such step would be to support the strategic allocation of Extrabudgetary funding. Aligning Extrabudgetary funding more closely with key principles could support the OSCE in better delivering its core mandate and help in attracting new types of funding.

7. The OSCE toolbox—including the Vienna Document and the Human Dimension's Vienna and Moscow Mechanism—is full of potential for promoting security, democracy, human rights and peaceful resolution of conflict. We strongly advocate for their utilization.

8. The Human Dimension is at the heart of the OSCE's comprehensive security concept. We stress the significance of the Human Dimension Implementation Meeting (HDIM), and the invaluable exchange with civil society representatives. Conferences like the HDIM offer an opportunity to review how effectively participating States have implemented agreed-upon commitments. Therefore, it is imperative to return to the annual convening of the HDIM, and we expect all States to uphold the decisions taken by our heads of state and government to this end.

9. Similarly, we believe it is timely to consider how we, the participating States, through the OSCE, more effectively can serve the people of this region, and enhancing the implementation of OSCE commitments to ensure further meaningful impact on the ground.

10. In closing, we stand united in our dedication to support Ukraine, stand against the Russian aggression and call for full accountability, while upholding the *raison d'être* of the OSCE. Let us work collaboratively to restore the foundations of our organization, enhance its mechanisms, and ensure it continues to play a pivotal role in promoting peace, security, economic and environmental security, and human rights across our region.

Thank you.