



ROYAL NORWEGIAN
MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Minister of Foreign Affairs

NORWEGIAN STATEMENT TO THE MINISTERIAL COUNCIL OF THE OSCE

As delivered by the Norwegian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Espen Barth Eide,
at the 31st Ministerial Council Meeting,
Malta, 5 December 2024

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Thank you - And thank you to Malta for being such good hosts and administrators of the organization. I congratulate Finland and wish them good luck for the next year, which is a very important year; 50 years after the Helsinki Final Act.

I would also like to welcome the willingness of Cyprus to take on this role in 2027. Since strong rumors are that Switzerland is considering the role for 2026, that would be warmly welcomed. If that is advanced, we will also arrive at a decision on the year after next. Let me also say that I very much appreciate that we have now achieved agreement on the four top offices. I look forward to working with them. I echo what the German Foreign Minister, Annalena, just said about Greek-Turkish cooperation. This is a good omen, and something to learn from. I happen to have a good experience working closely with Mr. Feridun Sinirlioglu who will be the new Secretary General. I can give him the warmest of recommendations after having worked closely with him.

Then to the situation at hand: we are now at Europe's darkest hour. The world looks very different from what we were hoping in 1990 or 1995. At this time, there was an idea to offer an opportunity to all European states, including the Russian Federation, to move forward and become good members of this great OSCE family. We also agreed on some shared principles of action.

I thank Finnish Foreign Minister, Elina, who recited the 10 key principles from the Helsinki Final Act.

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It was quite remarkable to sit here and listen to the foreign minister of the Russian Federation talking about some of these principles, namely the sovereign equality of states, non-interference in the affairs of other states and good faith.

The honest truth is that the Russian Federation is violating every single one of these principles. And not only the principles of the Helsinki Final Act, but also of the UN charter. Because, ladies and gentlemen, the number one rule of international affairs is: thou shall not invade and occupy other countries. Thou shall respect the sovereign equality. Thou shall respect the territorial integrity of other states. This is exactly what Russia is *not* doing. Lavrov's statement was like a testimony from a parallel universe. But nobody will be fooled by this. We know of course exactly what is going on. Ukraine shall win, and will win, this war. We are many countries standing up in the support of Ukraine in its heroic struggle for, not only its own independence, but also for the principles we all share. This matter to Ukrainians of course, but it also matters to Norwegians, and to so many others in this room.

But *after* Ukraine's victory, we also need to think about what the new post-war era should look like. After wars, the world never looks the same as it did before a war.

So as we move into the 50th anniversary of Helsinki, and as we have again a Finnish presidency, it is important to think about what has happened the past fifty years. The world now looks more like the world of 1975 than the world of 1995. However, in many ways it is worse. We have a hot war in Europe. It is not a Cold War, which was a painful experience, but different from what we see now.

It is important that we build on what we have. That we strengthen this institution. That we take with us the key ideas that led us through the conference, but also the institutions that came in when we made this into an organization. However, we also need to think out of the box and to reflect on how we will use these tools. Not only to stand up for principles, but also to shape the new post war era in Europe. All wars end, this war will end, and we need to think about what follows after that.

Towards the end I want to also mention Georgia. I am, like many of my colleagues, alarmed by the news that we are seeing these last days out of Georgia. I condemn the use of brutal force by police and security forces against protesters, media workers, civil society and opposition persons in Georgia. The scenes we have been witnessing are clearly incompatible with European and Euro-Atlantic integration, and with the fundamental democratic values that Georgia has committed to. We want Georgia as part of our family. We want to support Georgia on this path to becoming a good member of Euro-Atlantic integration. We are willing to help. But we cannot see this continue in this form, and we have to be very clear on this.

And again, I want to thank you for the attention, and to thank Malta for organizing this meeting. We look forward to cooperating also with the Finnish Chair-in-Office, which will be really important for the future of our continent. Thank you.