

Buantoscáireacht na hÉireann
don Eagraíocht um Shlándaíl agus Comhar san Eoraip
Permanent Mission of Ireland to the
Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe



Statement by Ireland at the 31st Meeting of the Ministerial Council
5 December 2024

Ireland aligns with the statement made by the EU delegation on behalf of the European Union. These remarks are made in our national capacity.

I would like to express our sincere thanks to Minister Borg and his team, including Ambassador Natasha Meli Daudey, for their skilful leadership and perseverance this year.

I would like to express my gratitude to the current Officer in Charge and acting Secretary General Kate Fearon and former OSCE Secretary General, Helga Schmid, for their tireless work, dedication and commitment to the OSCE. I also wish to put on record Ireland's appreciation for the work of the OSCE Secretariat, field missions and autonomous institutions.

Let me take this opportunity to welcome the next Chair-in-Office, Ms Elina Valtonen, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Finland, and to assure her and her team of Ireland's full support in 2025.

In the coming year, we will mark the fiftieth anniversary of the signing of the Helsinki Final Act. We must use this occasion to reflect seriously on how to return to respect for its fundamental principles. Principles that are as relevant today as they were in 1975, but that have been so comprehensively set aside by Russia's ongoing barbaric aggression against a neighbouring country.

As we meet today, Ukraine and its people continue to be afflicted by the devastating consequences of Russia's unprovoked and unjustified war of aggression. Month after month, Ukrainians are subjected to unspeakable horror as Russian missiles target civilians and leave a trail of death, injury and destruction in their wake. In recent weeks, Russia has cynically targeted energy infrastructure as Ukraine faces into another difficult winter. Millions of Ukrainians have been displaced, thousands of children forcibly deported from Ukraine and untold numbers arbitrarily detained by Russia in appalling conditions. Meanwhile, evidence of torture and sexual violence committed by Russian forces continues to grow.

Ireland condemns Russia's actions in Ukraine in the strongest possible terms. We reiterate our call for Russia's urgent and unconditional withdrawal from Ukraine.

We call for respect for the Geneva Convention as regards treatment of Prisoners of War, and the release and return of all unlawfully detained civilians, and in particular, Vadym Golda, Maksym Petrov and Dymtro Shabanov, unjustly detained since April 2022 due to their work in the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission in Ukraine.

Ireland will continue to stand in solidarity with Ukraine and will remain a strong advocate for Ukraine's EU membership aspirations. We will also continue to work with international partners on ensuring accountability for Russian actions in Ukraine.

At the same time, we must not forget that there are other unresolved disputes and areas of potential conflict across our region. Russia continues to maintain an illegal military



presence in breakaway regions of Georgia, and Moldova, and we have seen clear evidence of Moscow's interference in the democratic processes in both countries.

In countries across our region, we see a doubling down of autocratic regimes and the further erosion of human rights and democratic principles. Ireland has followed with concern the latest developments in Georgia. We again call on the Georgian authorities to exercise restraint, and to respect the fundamental right to freedom of expression and peaceful protest. This is an essential requirement for any state serious about joining the European Union.

Ireland supports the struggle for accountability for the victims of the brutal regime in Belarus. The OSCE Moscow Mechanism Report on Belarus highlighted disturbing patterns of repression, high levels of arbitrary detention and the use of torture and inhuman or degrading treatment on a systematic basis in places of detention. Through our engagement with Belarusian civil society, it is clear that this situation has worsened in the last year. Ireland calls on Belarus to comply with its OSCE and other international commitments, commencing with the immediate release of all political prisoners.

There are also glimmers of hope. We hope that Armenia and Azerbaijan can shortly reach agreement on an over-arching peace agreement to finally bring to an end to decades of conflict that have impacted so many lives.

Mr Chair,

Implementation of all OSCE commitments beginning with those set out in the Helsinki Final Act is essential to enhance citizen's lives and well-being. Russia's recent obstruction of the work of the Forum for Security and Cooperation is regrettable in this regard.

Ensuring the full, equal and meaningful participation of women in political and public life, in peacebuilding and security is essential to the success of our societies. We must ensure a gender-responsive approach is implemented in all of our work. We must also work to uphold the rights of LGBTI+ persons who face discrimination in the OSCE area.

As seen at the Warsaw Human Dimension Conference, civil society engagement strengthens our work. We must ensure that civil society is supported to be able to participate fully in OSCE work. I particularly welcome the contribution of the Civil Society Platform to this Ministerial and I wish to thank them for their valued recommendations.

Mr Chair,

The OSCE has lacked a unified budget since 2021, despite delivering important results and excellent value for money. The current situation is not sustainable. The OSCE needs an approved budget and adequate resources for its operations. I urge all participating States to stop holding the Organisation to ransom, and to adequately fund its important work.



Ireland welcomes agreement on the OSCE's top four posts. We hope the spirit of consensus can be maintained and Chairs-in-Office agreed for 2026 and 2027. In this regard, Ireland welcomes the candidacy of Cyprus for Chair-in-Office in 2027.

Thank you, Mr Chair