



REPUBLIC OF ALBANIA

MINISTRY FOR EUROPE AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS

*Remarks by*

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Mr. Chairperson, Dear Sebastian,

Mr. Secretary General,

Dear Colleagues,

I would like to start by thanking the Austrian OSCE Chairmanship for their hard work to build bridges at a time when our indivisible common security space is beset by uncertainty, unpredictability and insecurity.

In my statement, I would like to concentrate on a few key issues:

1. First, the crisis in and around Ukraine: it is entering its fourth winter; Parties periodically recommit to agree ceasefires and then violate them with growing frequency. Regrettably, the SMM reports fatalities almost every week. Albania strongly supports the Special Monitoring Mission in Ukraine and we reiterate that the safety and security of the Mission is of the highest priority.

Any threats or impediments are unacceptable. Those who restrict or intimidate monitors must be held to account. The only solution to the crisis in and around Ukraine is political and we call on all sides to swiftly and fully implement the Minsk agreements and honor their commitments. We reiterate our position that the territorial integrity of Ukraine and upholding of international law is essential to peace and security in the OSCE area.

2. Second, restoring European security requires upholding the Vienna spirit of cooperation, dialogue, understanding, and most of everything, trust. Trust has become a rare commodity in the OSCE. This is why we are pleased to see some progress in rebuilding it, such as through the Structured Dialogue process that we launched in Hamburg. We appreciate that Austria succeeded in instilling some of the Vienna spirit in the OSCE during its Chairmanship.

3. My third point concerns field operations. As a participating State that hosts a field operation, I maintain that field operations must be made to have impact, even though impact is not always easy to measure. For field operations to have real impact, a better coordination between the host country, the field operation, the Secretariat and the Institutions must be achieved.

4. This brings me to the OSCE Mission in Kosovo, in particular, the largest field operation after the SMM. The effectiveness of a mission, OMiK included, is always measured by the real impact it makes in the lives of people. Yet, despite the aimed impact, we have difficulties to understand that in many OSCE documents Kosovo continues to be referred to with an as much outdated as unacceptable footnote. And this is not all: the OSCE continues to exclude the participation of Kosovo representatives when issues concerning Kosovo, including mission reports, are discussed. The question that rises is how can the field operation in Kosovo aim to impact positively the Kosovo state and society, when the organization is not fully inclusive to Kosovo. Let me say it plainly: this Organization should not discuss about Kosovo, without Kosovo as part of the discussion.

5. My fifth and last point Mr. Chairman is that, as we all know, the value of the OSCE becomes more apparent when the weather turns bad and when there is a crisis at the door. The OSCE has demonstrated that it has great potential. The current geopolitical environment asks for a strengthened organization and it is our responsibility to make sure that it lives up to its full potential.

Arms control and CSBMs have always been at the core of OSCE's comprehensive and cooperative concept of security. The OSCE has never been a fair-weather instrument, which is why now, more than ever, the commitment to improve implementation of the Vienna Document and its modernization are critical for our common indivisible security.

Mr. Chairperson,

I would like to thank again the Austrian Chairmanship for the remarkable work in guiding the OSCE this past year. Many important processes have been put in motion, and I can assure the incoming Italian Chairmanship of our full support as it picks up the baton.

Thank you.