



Statement on the OSCE's role in supporting security sector governance and reform as part of the OSCE's comprehensive approach to security

Ministerial Council, 2-3 December 2021, Stockholm

This statement is delivered on behalf of the following participating States:

Albania, Andorra, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Canada, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Moldova, Mongolia, Montenegro, Netherlands, North Macedonia, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, San Marino, Serbia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom, Ukraine, United States, Turkey and Slovakia.

We acknowledge that security sector governance and reform (SSG/R) is a crucial part of the OSCE's comprehensive approach to security, based on existing principles and commitments in the politico-military, economic and environmental, and human dimensions. We share the view that good security sector governance relates to principles of good governance and how they apply to security provision, management, and oversight. Security sector governance means that the security sector is subject to the same standards of good governance as any other public sector, and that the security sector is to provide security to the State and its people in an accountable and effective way, within a framework of democratic civilian control, rule of law, respect for human rights, and the promotion of gender equality.

An inclusive, accountable and democratically controlled security sector with respect for human rights and the rule of law can promote confidence and trust between society and state, and stability and peace in the entire OSCE region. The Covid-19 pandemic is revealing and exacerbating existing gaps in security and justice systems, and in some cases, highlighting new areas for reform. These reforms can play an important role in building resilience to respond to future crises and in ensuring the security sector remains accountable and effective at a time when the needs are greatest and vulnerable communities are particularly at risk.

As reflected in the latest UN Security Council Resolution on security sector reform S/RES/2553 (2020), a representative, responsive, efficient, effective, professional, and accountable security sector without discrimination and with respect for human rights and the rule of law is a cornerstone of peace and sustainable development and is important for conflict prevention, peacebuilding and maintaining peace. As a regional arrangement under Chapter VIII of the UN Charter, the OSCE can make a significant contribution to these global initiatives. We believe, in partnership with others, we should further build on the OSCE's comparative advantages that lie in its comprehensive and regional approach to security.

We acknowledge that the OSCE has a long track record in supporting participating States in strengthening the governance of their security sectors and undertaking reforms in line with the

Organization's commitments. We welcome the progress made over the last years towards a more coherent and co-ordinated OSCE approach. At the same time, we believe that more could be done by taking full advantage of our available tools and expertise.

We welcome the publication of the second edition of the Guidelines on SSG/R for OSCE Staff. We encourage OSCE staff across Executive Structures, in particular in field operations, to take full advantage of this resource and continue their efforts in implementing a more coherent and co-ordinated OSCE approach to providing SSG/R assistance, in particular by placing emphasis on good governance principles, further increasing synergies and collaboration across all three OSCE dimensions of security, further integrating SSG/R into the OSCE's conflict cycle toolbox, further deepening co-ordination and co-operation with other relevant international actors, and making further use of its comparative advantages as well as existing tools and capacities. By encouraging a holistic, long-term and people-centred approach to reform, SSG/R promotes more effective, efficient, and sustainable OSCE support to security sector actors from across the OSCE area.

We commend the Swedish OSCE Chair for addressing many topics that are highly relevant for SSG/R and call on the incoming Polish OSCE Chair to remain seized of this matter and to expand support to an OSCE approach to this topic.

We reiterate that the following principles – all embedded in our existing commitments – should continue to guide the OSCE's support to national SSG/R processes:

- National ownership: support provided by the OSCE should be based on a request for assistance from that participating State and aligned with its national priorities for reform;
- Good and democratic security sector governance: OSCE's support should foster democratic civilian control, rule of law and respect for human rights;
- Gender equality: an essential element is the full, equal and active involvement of women in SSG/R and that women's participation in the security sector on a strategic and operational level is promoted;
- Inclusivity and comprehensiveness: a cross-dimensional approach to SSG/R support, based on the OSCE's comprehensive concept of security, is required to take account of the holistic nature of national SSG/R processes, while promoting the meaningful participation of all segments of society and the engagement of civil society;
- Responsiveness to the security needs of all people, including youth: SSG/R support should take into consideration needs of all segments of society and entail approaches that are gender-responsive and respect human rights. All support should be grounded in a thorough understanding of the context and based on a comprehensive needs assessment;
- Co-ordination and co-operation: OSCE activities should be co-ordinated with other actors at the local, national, regional and international level, building on OSCE's added value and comparative advantage. An integrated approach of the international community towards SSG/R is vital for impact and effectiveness.

The OSCE Group of Friends of SSG/R will continue to serve as an open platform for inclusive political dialogue on SSG/R within the OSCE. We remain convinced that an OSCE-wide strategic approach to SSG/R helps to strengthen the Organization's capacities to effectively address today's increasingly complex security environment, and thus would contribute to sustainable peace and stability across the OSCE area. To this end, we encourage all OSCE participating States and Partners for Co-operation to join this discussion and to provide political support to a coherent and strategic approach to SSG/R within our Organization.