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**STATEMENT BY MR. JEAN ASSELBORN,  
MINISTER OF FOREIGN AND EUROPEAN AFFAIRS OF THE  
GRAND DUCHY OF LUXEMBOURG, AT THE TWENTY-FOURTH  
MEETING OF THE OSCE MINISTERIAL COUNCIL**

Vienna, 7 December 2017

Mr. Chairperson,  
Mr. Secretary General,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

Luxembourg associates itself fully with the statement by the European Union.

In the present context, we need an OSCE capable of acting effectively above all to prevent conflicts.

Our Organization has recovered some of its capacity for action with the appointment of our new Secretary General and the Heads of the three independent institutions. It is thus possible after all to find consensus among the 57 participating States.

Luxembourg will continue to commit itself in favour of an OSCE with adequate financial and human resources to fulfil all of its mandates. Our voluntary contributions have increased by around 10 per cent since 2013, and I can assure you that they will not decrease in 2018. In 2016, the first monitor from Luxembourg was seconded to the Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine (SMM), and in 2017 my country financed its first junior professional officer.

Mr. Chairperson,

Let us be honest: we still face serious security challenges within the OSCE area. Dialogue exists, but it is not being translated into tangible results to resolve the open conflict in Donbas and the frozen conflicts in Nagorno-Karabakh, South Ossetia, Abkhazia and Transdnistria.

The year 2017 was marked by a worrying resumption of violence in Donbas. It is vital for all parties to implement the Minsk agreements in their entirety. The OSCE must continue to play its role in full to find a political and lasting settlement of the crisis. I also welcome the commitment of the Heads of State or Government in the Normandy format and their Ministers for Foreign Affairs. Based on our experience in the field, I believe that we must do

everything possible to provide better guarantees for the safety and access of OSCE monitors to Donbas. In 2018 my country will continue to support the SMM by way of voluntary financial contributions.

I should like here to thank the Austrian Chairmanship for having placed the combating of violent extremism and radicalization leading to terrorism on the agenda. This is a key area in which we must all act concertedly.

Finally, I should like to launch a collective appeal for us to redouble our efforts to protect and promote human rights. The universal, indivisible and inalienable character of human rights is its strength. Unfortunately, we are seeing increasingly not only that these rights are not respected but also that their institutional basis is under threat.

Luxembourg is extremely concerned by activities that restrict civil society and independent media through laws intended to silence dissident voices. The defenders of human rights are having to deal increasingly with attacks on their freedom, their physical integrity and even their lives. This is unacceptable.

There is no picking and choosing with human rights. They are not optional.

Luxembourg will not stint in its efforts to help create a free, democratic, common and indivisible Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian security community based on joint commitments, shared aims and respect for the intrinsic dignity of every individual, a vision that was reaffirmed at the Summit in Astana.

Mr. Chairperson,

I will conclude by thanking Austria for its warm welcome and for its second successful OSCE Chairmanship. We wish the future Italian Chairmanship every success and can assure it of our support in the important task it will be undertaking.

Thank you.