

Madam Chair,

Excellencies,

On 30 November 2021, you elected Finland to chair the OSCE in 2025. Our ambition at that time was to facilitate a comprehensive discussion among the participating States regarding European security in 2025.

We intended to approach this in the “spirit of Helsinki,” aiming for an open dialogue firmly grounded in the principles and commitments we have collectively endorsed.

Regrettably, that spirit was shattered by Russia on February 24, 2022.

It has been buried under the ruins caused by relentless large-scale attacks against Ukraine, including towards civilians.

But the principles and commitments of the OSCE have not lost their relevance. If one participating member violates against those, it does not make the rules void. On the very contrary.

After two and a half years of Russia's full-scale war of aggression, Ukraine continues to demonstrate remarkable resilience.

It is our collective responsibility to support Ukraine in its lawful defense against the aggressor. It is our principal task also in the OSCE.

This duty carries weight even beyond Ukraine. We must strive towards a world where mutually agreed rules and international law prevail.

Excellencies,

Over the past few months, Finland has conducted extensive consultations with participating States regarding our priorities for 2025. There is a broad consensus among us on two key issues:

1. The importance of adhering to our shared principles and commitments. Principles that are neither negotiable nor subject to revision or re-interpretation.
2. The need to preserve and strengthen the OSCE, including its autonomous institutions and field operations.

Next year, Finland will assume the Chairpersonship with a sense of responsibility toward these two objectives.

We will serve as a constructive Chair, listening attentively and collaborating closely with all states committed to promoting cooperative security through the OSCE.

Let me now briefly outline our tentative programme for next year.

The overarching theme of our Chairpersonship will be resilience — both of the participating States and for the OSCE.

Resilience, the ability to respond to and recover from crises, has gained increased attention among the participating States due to Russia's military aggression against Ukraine. However, it encompasses also challenges beyond military threats, such as responding to other types of malign activities and addressing climate change or making us more immune towards disinformation.

The OSCE, with its comprehensive concept of security, including human rights, democracy and the rule of law, is well placed to tackle these issues. We will tap into the areas where the OSCE adds most value.

As Chair, we will work according to three key guiding principles: Respect, Respond, and Prepare. Let me begin with the first principle, which is also the most fundamental one:

Respect for OSCE's principles and commitments.

On the 50th anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act, the Helsinki principles and commitments remain valid. Every single one of them.

Sovereignty, including the right to belong or not to belong to international organizations; Refraining from the threat or use of force; Inviolability of frontiers; Territorial integrity of States; Peaceful settlement of disputes; Non-intervention in internal affairs; Respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.

These are not only commitments among those agreed in Helsinki in 1975. They are also legal obligations stemming from the UN Charter.

Finland will emphasize their relevance throughout the coming year, and we will be vocal when they are violated. It is our responsibility to promote and uphold the rules-based order and international law.

In the Helsinki Final Act, we made commitments toward one another as participating States, but also toward our people, our citizens.

Consequently, we will involve the civil society firmly in our work during 2025. We will do so by allowing and creating space for civil society representatives to engage with the Chair and other participating States.

Second, we must respond to current challenges.

The security situation in Europe is more unpredictable than at any other time since the end of the Cold War.

Supporting Ukraine remains a priority. At the same time, Finland is committed to working across the OSCE region toward the settlement of conflicts, easing tensions, and building trust.

We aim to fully leverage the wide array of tools at the OSCE's disposal. Despite the enormous challenges, the OSCE continues its valuable work across the region, including through its 12 field operations and three autonomous institutions – ODIHR, the High Commissioner on National Minorities, and the Representative on Freedom of the Media.

The Chair will offer its good offices whenever and wherever they are needed, and we look forward to collaborating and identifying opportunities with all participating states eager to enhance their cooperation with the OSCE.

Third, we need to collectively prepare for the future.

Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine has significantly undermined the security landscape of Europe. However murky the situation may be today, history will not end here.

We should double our efforts to forge a better future. Finland will strongly involve youth in these discussions.

Finland seeks to preserve and enhance the OSCE and its functionality to maximize its potential. Preparing for the future also requires foresight and long-term planning from the OSCE executive structures. Finland will aim at enhancing this work.

Approving the budget for the OSCE by consensus remains a priority. In its absence, we must work together to explore innovative solutions to sustain the OSCE's operations, including funding that enables more strategic resource allocation.

Excellencies,

Finland approaches resilience from a whole-of-society perspective. We will place a high value on promoting gender equality and inclusivity. We want to strengthen the rights and participation of civil society, particularly youth and persons with disabilities, in the OSCE's work and events across all dimensions.

Finland will emphasize issues such as cyber security, media freedom and literacy, support for human rights defenders, and climate security, all integral parts of resilient societies. We will

explore opportunities to leverage new technologies and engage various stakeholders, including researchers and the private sector, in the OSCE's work.

In politico-military matters, we will also serve as Chair of the Forum for Security Co-operation during the last trimester of 2025.

Madam Chair,

We fully support you in your efforts to resolve the ongoing issues that have plagued this organization for far too long, including the lack of consensus on the budget, TOP4 leadership positions and Chairpersonships for upcoming years.

The OSCE and its staff in Vienna, Warsaw, the Hague, Prague and across the Organization's field presence, work tirelessly for the benefit of all of us. They deserve better than this.

I urge all participating States to extend their support to Malta on safeguarding the functionality and future of this Organization.

I commend your country, your able team, and you personally for your leadership this year. We are fortunate to continue close co-operation with you in the troika next year.

Excellencies, Madam Chair,

I look forward to continued co-operation with all participating States, partner countries, the Parliamentary Assembly and the OSCE executive structures, as we finalize our chairpersonship programme in the upcoming months.

Thank you.