

**NATIONAL STATEMENT OF H.E. ANN LINDE MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF SWEDEN,
AT THE 27TH OSCE MINISTERIAL COUNCIL IN TIRANA, 3 DECEMBER 2020**

Excellencies, dear colleagues,

I want to thank our Albanian hosts, and my friend Edi Rama, who have guided the organization through this challenging year. Thanks to your efforts, and those of your professional team, the OSCE was among the first organizations in the global system to resume activities in the beginning of the pandemic. Thanks also to all dedicated women and men in the various OSCE field operations that every day continue to contribute to our security.

I also want to offer my heartfelt condolences to all who have lost family members, friends and loved ones during the pandemic.

Excellencies,

This year we celebrate the 45th anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act and the 30th anniversary of the Charter of Paris, the foundations for the European security order. When looking back at the Charter of Paris, one can feel the sense of hope that existed when it was adopted. After the decades-long Cold War, a new era for security in Europe was dawning, built on respect for international law, human rights and democracy rather than a balance between rival global powers and their so called “spheres of interest”.

A year after Paris, at the Moscow meeting in 1991, we, as participating states, emphasized that human rights, democracy and the rule of law are of international concern and do not belong exclusively to the internal affairs of the State concerned.

By holding each other accountable we make sure that our commitments remain relevant. By honouring our commitments, we make sure that our region is safe. The turbulent events after the presidential election in Belarus are a reminder of the importance to uphold these principles.

The OSCE's autonomous institutions play an important role in ensuring accountability. They support us all in the implementation of our commitments. I look forward to the appointment of the three new heads of institutions and the new Secretary General. I particularly welcome that gender balance will be achieved in the appointments. For Sweden, gender equality is a core priority. It goes just as well for appointments to high positions as for the inclusion of women in all parts of society. The economic empowerment of women is a key aspect of viable societies, just as the inclusion of women in peace talks is a prerequisite for sustainable peace.

With the institutions fully operational we are better equipped to handle the many challenges that our organization and our region are facing.

Of all these challenges, the conflicts that remain unresolved in our region are the most acute. The ceasefire in eastern Ukraine is of course welcome, but it remains fragile and the conflict in and around Ukraine is still far from being resolved, both as regards the eastern parts of the country and the Crimean Peninsula.

The escalation in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and the tragic human losses this conflict has caused show the risks inherent in the unresolved conflicts. With the ceasefire agreement in place, we hope that negotiations

under the auspices of the Minsk Group Co-Chairs can result in a sustainable political solution that prevents further suffering. These tragic events should also serve as a reminder why the protracted conflicts in Georgia and Moldova need our continued attention and political commitment.

The OSCE has a unique value as an organization for conflict prevention and confidence and security building measures. Although not without challenges, the Open Skies Treaty and the Vienna document still serve as models for other regions when searching for tools to lower tensions and create more transparency. It is our duty to make sure that they remain implemented and relevant.

When Sweden takes on the role as Chair of the OSCE next year, our primary focus will be on the fundamental tasks of the OSCE:

- To defend the European security order as expressed in the Helsinki Final Act and the Charter of Paris.
- To uphold the OSCE comprehensive concept of security, with a special focus on human rights, democracy and gender equality, including the Women, Peace and Security agenda.
- And to contribute to resolving the conflicts in our region.

I look forward to working together with all of you in trying to achieve these goals.

Thank you very much!