

Programme of the Swedish OSCE Chairpersonship

2021

Foreword

The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe has a proud heritage. That this broad range of countries were able to come together, in times of global antagonism and disagreement, and unite around a set of common principles and commitments, is a historic achievement. That is what we – the participating States from Vancouver to Vladivostok – were able to achieve with the adoption of the Helsinki Final Act in 1975. Fifteen years later, we succeeded in deepening and strengthening our joint commitments through the Charter of Paris for a New Europe.

Today, we live in a different world in many respects. But conflicts and political crises continue to challenge our common security, democratic principles and sustainable development. At the same time, transnational threats – including terrorism, cybercrime and environmental degradation – have intensified. The COVID-19 pandemic has also placed an additional strain on our societies.

The common denominator of all these challenges is this: they can only be solved sustainably through international cooperation. A multilateral platform such as the OSCE, is therefore immensely important. It is time for us to go “back to basics” and remind ourselves of our common rules and tools that we have created to prevent and solve conflicts and crises, and to build



Chairperson-in-Office, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Ann Linde.

Credit: Kristian Pohl/Regeringskansliet

security for both people and states. As Chair, Sweden will emphasise fundamental tasks of the OSCE such as the European security order and the OSCE comprehensive concept of security and to contribute to resolving conflicts.

Sweden strives to be an active and constructive participating State of the OSCE. We would like to bring to the table some of the issues where we can work together to improve the OSCE: that gender equality helps societies develop in a resilient and prosperous manner, that women’s participation in conflict resolution leads to more sus-

tainable peace, and that respect for democratic principles and human rights – including freedom of expression and freedom of the press – promotes security and lays the foundation for economic growth.

I am honoured to take over the Chairpersonship of this crucial organisation in 2021. My objective is that, as an organisation, we should remind ourselves of the foundation we have created and on which we can continue to build – together. **It is about our commitments and our security. It is our OSCE.**

Back to basics

Our part of the world is facing major challenges. International law is being violated, conflicts remain unresolved with outbreaks of violence or ongoing aggression, international obligations regarding human rights, principles of democracy and the rule of law are increasingly being called into question. Climate change poses an ever-increasing threat and progress on gender equality is slow and uneven. At the same time, we have at our disposal the world's largest regional security organisation, built on commitments and principles that, if implemented, could bring peace and stability to our region.

Sweden is looking forward to chairing our common endeavour in the OSCE in 2021. As Chair of the OSCE, Sweden's primary focus will be to go back to basics. Emphasis will be on the fundamental tasks of the OSCE: to defend the European security order, to uphold the OSCE comprehensive concept of security and to contribute to resolving conflicts in accordance with international law.



The people of Sweden have the right to take part in demonstrations, freedom of speech, a free press, the opportunity to move freely in nature and the right to scrutinise those in power. This freedom is about creating an equal society. Fridays for Future is a movement that began in August 2018, after then 15-year-old Greta Thunberg sat in front of the Swedish parliament every school day for three weeks, to protest against the lack of action on the climate crisis. Credit: Jann Lipka/imagebank.sweden.se

A world where common rules are respected is a more secure world



The Decalogue of the Helsinki Final Act of 1975, the commitments laid down in the Paris Charter of 1990 – together with all other OSCE principles and commitments – constitute the foundation of the European security order. They are the guiding principles that we, the participating States, have jointly committed to observe. Sovereign equality, refraining from the threat or use of force, respect for territorial integrity and the freedom of states to choose their own security arrangements, as well as respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, are among these basic principles of international law. Underpinning them is, of course, the Charter of the United Nations.

Ten years ago, we reconfirmed our pledge in the Astana Commemorative Declaration. It is in the interest of the whole OSCE region and its people that we honour the commitments made. They are our common achievement and matters of immediate and legitimate concern to all participating States. A world where these commitments are adhered to is a more secure world.

During the Swedish Chairpersonship, these principles will constitute the backbone of our efforts. They will guide our activities in the field, our agenda-setting in the Permanent Council as well as our approach to conflict resolution in the formats where the OSCE CiO is involved. Political accountability is an important part of the OSCE's work.

Human security – the inextricable link between the security of states and the security of citizens

Relations between states are only one side of security: just as important for people in their everyday lives are factors such as political security, full enjoyment of human rights, democracy, the rule of law, as well as economic and environmental security. These factors are all prerequisites for secure and resilient societies, which in turn create more security between states. The OSCE comprehensive concept of security recognises this. Over the past years, democratic principles and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms have been increasingly challenged in our region, and the Covid-19 pandemic has augmented the risk of further backsliding.

The right to freedom of opinion and expression and freedom of the media are key elements of the OSCE comprehensive concept of security and will be central priorities in the human dimension. During the Swedish Chairpersonship, we will also underline democratic processes, civic space and participation as central to preserving and promoting respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, democracy and the rule of law. In this

work, civil society actors play an important role. Issues concerning human rights, democracy, the rule of law and gender equality will be mainstreamed across the agenda.

Our efforts will be carried out in support of, and be complementary to, the important work done by the autonomous institutions, the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, the Representative on the Freedom of the Media and the High Commissioner on National Minorities. Their work is vital in assisting participating States to uphold and implement OSCE commitments and principles, to strengthen and promote the protection of human rights, and to prevent conflicts through supporting democracy and free and independent media and containing and de-escalating tensions involving national minorities.

The Code of Conduct on Political-Military Aspects of Security will guide the Chair's efforts to highlight the importance of ensuring democratic, civilian control over armed forces.





Election observers during presidential election of North Macedonia, Skopje, 5 May 2019.
Credit: OSCE/ Maria K k e

Efforts to resolve conflicts must be accelerated, tools to build confidence and prevent conflicts are there to be used

Contributing to conflict resolution in the OSCE region based on our commonly agreed principles and commitments will be at the top of our agenda. To this end, the Swedish Chair will actively support the OSCE's existing conflict resolution formats and processes, including through the special representatives of the Chairperson-in-Office. We will promote the unique OSCE field operations. Their crucial contributions will be supported and highlighted during field visits by the Chairperson-in-Office.

Among the conflicts in the OSCE region, the conflict in and around Ukraine remains the most obvious challenge to the European security order. As Chair, Sweden recognises the vital importance of the Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine and will seek to contribute to the ongoing efforts in the Normandy Format and the Trilateral Contact Group for a sustainable political solution in line with the OSCE's principles and commitments, with full respect for the sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence of Ukraine within its internationally recognised borders.

In a similar way, we will play an active role in the Geneva International Discussions and the related Incident Prevention and Response Mechanism (IPRM) regarding Georgia, as well as in support of the Transdniestrian settlement process.

As Chair and permanent member of the Minsk Group, Sweden will also support the efforts of the Minsk Group Co-Chairs to resolve the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. Last year's outbreak of armed conflict, its heavy death toll and human suffering have underlined the inherent risk in the lingering, protracted conflicts in the OSCE region.

Ten years have passed since the decision in Vilnius on "the elements of the conflict cycle". The year 2021 marks an opportunity to revisit the existing tools to prevent and resolve conflicts.

In all armed conflicts, we will call for respect for international law, including, international humanitarian law. We will back measures to mitigate the humanitarian consequences and advocate an inclusive approach. Sweden's strong

multilateral commitment will translate into strengthened cooperation between the UN and the OSCE, as well as between the EU and the OSCE, not least in preventing and addressing conflict. We will seek cooperation with civil society organisations. Sweden will work consistently to uphold the OSCE comprehensive concept of security and the inclusion and meaningful participation of women and men in efforts to address all phases of the conflict cycle, as well as to implement the Women, Peace and Security Agenda. This is vital for the successful prevention and mitigation of conflicts, as well as to consolidate peace once hostilities have ended.

Sweden will support efforts in the Forum for Security Cooperation (FSC) to ensure that confidence and security-building measures remain relevant, including in the current situation when they are being

challenged. In the same way that the OSCE can only be effective when everyone acts in good faith in accordance with the European security order, confidence and security-building measures (CSBMs) will only function as intended when parties to the treaties comply with their letter and spirit. As Chair, Sweden will endeavour to support the important role of the Open Skies Treaty, an important functioning CSBM.

The CSBMs also need to be adapted to changing circumstances. As Chair, we will continue to support discussions on the proposal for a modernisation of the Vienna Document with the aim of increasing transparency and predictability, and strengthening confidence between states on military matters. We see the Structured Dialogue as an important platform to contribute to these discussions.



Participants during the opening session of the 25th OSCE Ministerial Council in Milan, 6 December 2018. Credit: ANSA/FLAVIO LO SCALZO

Include the whole population – implementation of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda and equal rights are vital security interests

Twenty years after the adoption of United Nations Security Council resolution (UNSCR) 1325 and its subsequent resolutions, women are still heavily under-represented in conflict prevention and resolution, and the impact of conflict on women, men, girls and boys is often not fully recognised. This holds also true for the OSCE region.

During the Swedish Chair, we will prioritise implementation of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda. We will work to strengthen the OSCE in producing data, analysis and actions – not least related to the conflicts – that take account of gender. When visiting field operations, the Chairperson-in-Office will pay special attention to their important work in this regard, as well as to women's rights organisations on the ground.

Gender equal societies, where human rights are fully enjoyed by all, are more secure with better prospects for sustainable, resilient and prosperous development. Women are disproportionately exposed to economic vulnerabilities and the security that follows from equal participation in economic life. Economic empowerment is necessary to enable and achieve full and effective political participation by women in conflict prevention and resolution. Sweden will take on the work in the second dimension with this as one important priority. We will focus on women's economic empowerment and meaningful participation, building on the decision that was taken in Vilnius in 2011.



Building resilient and more robust societies to counter threats to human security

Threats to our security are not only military in nature, nor necessarily linked to conflicts between states. In order to counter the threats from organised crime, terrorism, cyber threats and the destruction of our environment, we must continue to build robust, resilient societies. In the same vein, corruption is a menace that undermines our societies. It fuels organised crime and systematically threatens sustainable development, democracy and security. Sweden will continue the work of previous Chairs to fight corruption and strengthen good governance. By enhancing democracy, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms and the rule of law, societies can be made more secure.

The Swedish Chair will highlight the relation between cyber issues, security and international human rights law. We will aim to move forward on implementation of confidence-building measures in the cyber domain.

Climate change and natural degradation affect millions of women, men, girls and boys around the world and in the OSCE region. More attention needs to be paid to the link between climate change and security. Prevention and peacebuilding need to become climate aware, and efforts to combat climate change should be made conflict sensitive. Cooperation on environmental issues may also have positive outcomes beyond improvement in the local environment. As Chair, we will continue the OSCE's active role in preventing and countering environmental and climate change-related security challenges.



Captain Anna Björsson speaking at a joint meeting of the Forum for Security Co-operation and the Permanent Council. Credit; OSCE/ Micky Kroell.



Foreign Minister Ann Linde as incoming CiO near the bridge over the contact line at Stanytsia Luhanska in eastern Ukraine, 3 March 2020.

Credit: Ministry for Foreign Affairs/Johannes Danielsson.

About us – the Swedish CiO 2021

Holding the Chair is not just about what we accomplish, but how we accomplish it. Sweden will endeavour to work as inclusively and as resource-efficiently as possible. We want to see the active participation of civil society, think tanks and research institutions. They can provide important perspectives, contribute to achieving shared goals and facilitate informal dialogue and cooperation that underpin our political efforts. We will strive to be accessible, cost-efficient and lean. This is also a question of democracy and legitimacy – chairing the organisation must be an attainable goal for all 57 participating States.

In an era when our security is being challenged by increasingly complex threats, our chance to make a real difference lies in dialogue, cooperation, inclusion and respect for agreed principles. By sticking to our commitments for the benefit of our common security, we can ensure that the OSCE makes a difference.

**OUR COMMITMENTS.
OUR SECURITY.
OUR OSCE.**