



**Meeting of the OSCE Ministerial Council  
Łódź, Poland | 1 December 2022**

**Address by OSCE PA President Margareta Cederfelt**

*Check against delivery*

Thank you, Mr. Chair,  
Madam Secretary General,  
Ministers and Ambassadors,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

Let me begin by warmly thanking you, Mr. Chair, for hosting the Ministerial Council in your hometown.

Last year I had the pleasure of addressing you from my constituency in Stockholm.

It is a unique feeling to be able to connect what brings us together today - the OSCE - with those who brought us in this room - our citizens.

For several years now, the Parliamentary Assembly has worked closely with successive Chairmanships to refocus our attention on those for which the OSCE truly matters - the one billion people living in our region.

They are the first victims of military aggression.

They are the ones whose livelihoods are threatened by high energy prices and inflation, or by climate change.

And they are the ones whose daily lives are limited by the failure to enable a free and independent media, a vibrant civil society, and strong democratic institutions.

But here, as in every city and village in Poland, we see international solidarity at work.

We see genuine brotherhood:

Poles volunteering to support Ukraine and its refugees.

Ukrainians given a new, temporary, home and the freedom to work and support their families and loved ones.

Together, two people standing up to unprovoked and unjustified military aggression convinced that, soon enough, Ukraine will again be whole and free.

I hope that during your limited time in Poland, you will feel the warmth of the human spirit.

It must inspire us to further strengthen our support for Ukraine's independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders.

It must compel us to remain firm with the Russian Federation and not accept their aggression – not at all.

We must safeguard our European security order and the Helsinki Final Act.

Our Assembly met last week in Warsaw.

It sends me here with clear messages:

This OSCE Ministerial Council must recognize the Russian Federation as having committed gross, and still uncorrected violations of the Helsinki Final Act.

On this basis, the OSCE must disregard any dissent by the Russian Federation when it comes to decisions related to Ukraine.

A tribunal must be initiated to investigate and prosecute all those responsible for Russian war crimes in Ukraine.

And we parliamentarians, we cannot tolerate impunity. We stand firmly side by side with Ukraine, just as I know you will here at this Ministerial Council.

This OSCE Ministerial Council should take steps to establish a high-level body to examine the damages inflicted by the Russian Federation on Ukraine, and to assess the reparations that Russia should be accountable for.

Russia started the war, and it must pay for it.

Your Excellencies,

If Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov had been present today, he would have seen our unity in condemnation of his country's unjustifiable actions in Ukraine.

One year after decrying the “eastward expansion of NATO” as a threat to Russia’s territory, he would have been held accountable for Moscow’s attempted westward expansion, at the expense of Ukraine.

Looking back, what a difference a year makes.

In Stockholm, we were walking on the brink of the precipice.

And, in spite of all international efforts to take a step back, we have taken the plunge.

This war has already claimed tens of thousands of lives. And I must say, it’s enough. The war must come to an end.

How far will this go on? And how much more damage can the OSCE take before it crumbles?

The current situation threatens to further accelerate a disintegration which has been years in the making.

This has crippled the OSCE’s ability to deliver.

But I must say, I am very pleased by all the actions taken by the Polish Chairmanship to continue the activities to benefit the people of the OSCE area. This shows true courage and commitment to OSCE principles.

With no consensus amongst the fifty-seven participating States, where will we find ourselves next year?

And two years from now, will the fiftieth anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act also be an end?

No, I don’t believe so. I can see the commitment here. Let’s work together for a strong OSCE.

Ministers,

As much as we can disagree around this table, I am convinced that no one wishes for the end of the OSCE.

After all, among all the multilateral tools at your disposal, it is the one with the best value for money to build long-lasting peace and stability.

So now is the time to support the OSCE, to fully support the OSCE.

Now is the time to agree on its modest budget for years to come. It's time to find the way forward and not let one country undermine the OSCE.

Now is the time to ensure that its Secretariat and Institutions can continue to operate efficiently through trusted and proven leadership.

And now is the time to protect the work and the staff of the OSCE in the field.

From climate change to migration, from energy security to countering terrorism, from strengthening democratic institutions and the rule of law to combating corruption, there are endless challenges requiring deeper co-operation between our countries.

As host to a Field Operation for thirty years, North Macedonia is best equipped to understand the true value of the OSCE. And when I have met the Foreign Minister of North Macedonia, I have seen his eagerness to take over the OSCE.

You know that genuine and inclusive dialogue, based on respect for shared principles, is essential to progress towards the implementation of our OSCE commitments.

North Macedonia knows that positive engagement with the OSCE offers a blueprint to better the lives of your citizens.

My fellow parliamentarians and I look forward to working with you to protect and promote the work of the OSCE.

The tools are there.

And now, Ministers, it is up to you to make sure that they are used so that, together, we can continue advancing comprehensive security in our region.

Our one billion citizens count on you.

And now I would like to thank Chairperson-in-Office Rau and Secretary General Helga Schmid for your commitment to this organization.

Thank you.