

Statement by H. E. Tomáš Petříček
Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic
26th Meeting of the OSCE Ministerial Council, Bratislava 2019

Mr. Chairman, Secretary General, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me join others in thanking the Slovak Chairmanship for their excellent work in 2019.

We strongly believe in the continued relevance of the OSCE as the normative framework of our common security and principal platform for dialogue in all three dimensions of our cooperation. At the same time, we are aware of the limits of the OSCE's role in addressing protracted conflicts. One state actor that has repeatedly violated our common principles and commitments, caused several conflicts, invaded and annexed its neighbours is at the same expected to contribute to the solutions.

I have joined the Bratislava Appeal by our Chairman Miro Lajčák. All participating States should be able to recommit themselves to the OSCE fundamentals. However, these reaffirmations must be also followed up by action especially on the unresolved conflicts.

We are encouraged by the hopeful progress in the disengagement of the parties' military forces along the line of contact in the Donbas conflict. We applaud the willingness and strategic patience of Ukraine in pursuing the resolution on the basis of the Minsk agreements. We expect the Normandy format summit meeting on 9 December to give a decisive impulse to the renewed implementation of the Minsk agreements

We remain committed to implementation of arms control and CSBM mechanisms, most notably the CFE and Open Skies Treaties and the Vienna Document. And we regret that we could not move faster and farther in negotiating the modernisation of the Vienna Document,

despite the best efforts of the Czech FSC Chairmanship. Still, I am proud that the Czech Ambassador Ivo Šrámek has been chairing FSC this Autumn. We hope the year ahead provides all for a sufficient time to arrive at a good modernisation package and we regret we couldn't adopt a decision to that effect.

I am convinced much greater attention should be paid to economic and environmental cooperation, which Prague has traditionally supported by hosting the annual EEF.

Protection and promotion of human rights has always been the Czech priority in the Human Dimension. Supporting civil society should remain part of our comprehensive approach to OSCE commitments, as well as respecting the role of our autonomous Institutions. The Czech contribution to the HD work is made by chairing the Human Dimension Committee and we will gladly continue in this role.

2019 has seen anniversaries important for the Czechs and Slovaks. We commemorated the 30th anniversary of the Velvet Revolution and the fall of totalitarian régimes in our part of Europe. The Helsinki Final Act helped that to happen in 1989 and remains as relevant today as it was in 1975. The work must go on. In conclusion, I would like to wish the upcoming Albanian Chairmanship all the success in 2020, and appreciate Sweden's and Poland's being ready for 2021 and 2022. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.