



# Address of the Hon. Dr Ian Borg, Chair-in-Office of the OSCE to the United Nations Security Council

New York, 19 April 2024

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Madam President,

It is an honour for me to address the Security Council in my capacity as Chair-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe.

2024 represents a high-water mark for Malta and its commitment to effective multilateralism: As OSCE Chair and an elected member of the Security Council, we are not tiring in our efforts towards peace and security in the world. In fact, this dual role provides us with a unique vantage point to advocate for and enhance the cooperation between the OSCE and the United Nations.

They are mutually reinforcing institutions, each playing a complementary role in the pursuit of peace and security on the regional and international stage respectively.

The OSCE is the largest regional arrangement under Chapter VIII of the United Nations Charter. It is with pride that we recall that Malta was the driving force behind the recognition of this special status in 1992. This is tangible evidence of our long-standing commitment to strengthening synergy and complementarity between these key institutions. You can be assured that we will stay the course and do our utmost to reinforce the collaboration between the UN and the OSCE, both with regard to policy and operational implementation.

Madam President,

Sadly, the challenging security situation in the OSCE region is dictating a major part of our agenda. As States and societies, we are confronted with an era of profound uncertainty.

For more than two years, we are witnessing, once again, a devastating conflict on European soil. Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine not only reverberates through the dark corridors of history but also serves as a stark reminder of the trials our multilateral system currently faces.



The international rules-based order designed to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war is being rigorously tested in these unprecedented times.

These multilateral frameworks established not only to prevent the outbreak of conflict but also to nurture a lasting peace, are now facing an erosion of their effectiveness as they strive to meet the complex demands of our world.

Yet, it is in the crucible of such challenges that our resolve must be strengthened. These testing times, while difficult, should not breed despair nor resign us to inaction.

Instead, they should galvanize us to move beyond words, to move beyond support for the cause of multilateralism and commit ourselves to effective, tangible, and sustainable engagement.

Madam President, advocacy alone is not enough.

Any multilateral organisation depends on the work and commitment of all its members, regardless of their size.

It is for this reason that Malta accepted the request to assume the Chair of the OSCE for the year 2024 at the eleventh hour.

We assumed this Chairpersonship with a profound sense of humility and responsibility, fully aware of the pivotal moment at which we are assuming this role.

Malta's approach is fundamentally driven by the goal of enhancing stability and building – or I should rather say rebuilding – trust within the international system.

The pursuit of peace and security is one of the fundamental principles of Malta's foreign policy. We have consistently upheld dialogue and cooperation as the most effective and sustainable means of resolving differences, rather than resorting to violence or force.

With our unique position at the crossroads of East and West, Europe and Africa, Malta is well-placed to serve as a bridge in this volatile global landscape.

In the spirit of our Chairpersonship's motto "strengthening resilience, enhancing security", our primary focus is ensuring the broader functionality of the OSCE.

We are determined to find effective and sustainable solutions to strengthen the OSCE's resilience and capabilities to respond effectively and flexibly to the evolving security landscape. To this end, we are working hard to facilitate consensus on all necessary institutional decisions.



This includes securing a sound financial basis for the Organization, as well as steering decisions on its new institutional leadership, both in terms of the top executive officers and future OSCE Chairs.

The OSCE must remain anchored in the principles and commitments to which all 57 participating States have agreed to 50 years ago - not as an end in itself, but as a means to an end.

And that end is to restore peace and security in our region.

Throughout our Chairpersonship, we will hold a consistent and principled position, based on the unequivocally collectively agreed norms set out in the Helsinki Final Act and Charter of Paris, using the Organization as a platform for accountability for acts in breach of these principles.

This is why we must and will keep Russia's illegal war of aggression against Ukraine, at the top of the agenda.

I saw the devastation caused by this war first-hand during my visit to Ukraine – my first visit in my capacity as Chair-in-Office.

In Kyiv, I reaffirmed our unwavering support to Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity in accordance with international law.

Thousands of civilian lives lost, families torn apart, and millions forced to flee their homes.

These are the real consequences of war.

The ongoing attacks must stop. This war must come to an end.

I take this opportunity to reaffirm the unwavering commitment of the Maltese Chairpersonship towards facilitating every effort aimed at securing the release of Vadym Golda, Maxim Petrov, Dmytro Shabanov -the three OSCE Special Monitoring Mission officials who are currently being illegally detained.

We must and we will do our utmost to ensure that they regain their freedom, well-being, and be reunited with their loved ones, whom I met while visiting Ukraine. We urge all members of the international community to join us in calling on the Russian Federation to undertake all measures to ensure their immediate and unconditional release.

Madam President, our Chairpersonship will also prioritise the OSCE's role in addressing other conflicts across the OSCE region, including in Abkhazia, South Ossetia, and Transdniestria.

We aim to engage with all sides to improve the prospects for comprehensive resolution of conflicts by preventing escalation and restoring stability.

We are committed to engaging actively and collaboratively with all relevant stakeholders on the ground – strengthening the invaluable work carried out by our network of Field Missions.

During my recent visits to Serbia, Kosovo and the Republic of Moldova, I conveyed a clear and resolute message: the OSCE stands ready to support peace and strengthen democracy and the rule of law by facilitating dialogue towards durable and sustainable political solutions.

I look forward to upcoming visits as we continue highlighting our commitment to sustained engagement across the region and to strengthen the excellent relations that the OSCE shares with its partners.

As we continue to steer our Chairpersonship, we remain dedicated to advancing a robust and dynamic programme across the OSCE's three dimensions.

We will continue leveraging our diplomatic initiatives here at the Security Council concerning the Women, Peace, and Security agenda. Women's agency, perspectives, and capabilities are crucial for fostering meaningful dialogues, shaping more effective policies, and enhancing security.

We also aim to give a new impetus to strengthening the OSCE's work on challenges in the cyber sphere, addressing transnational threats, and ensuring compliance with conventional arms control commitments.

Recognising the connection between the well-being of our citizens, economic stability, and environmental sustainability, the Maltese Chairpersonship will prioritize efforts to narrow digital divides, facilitate broader access to digital skills and technologies, and foster increased collaboration on climate resilience, adaptation, and mitigation. Simultaneously, we will intensify our commitment to combat corruption and bolster food security.

Malta's Chairpersonship is convinced that our shared human rights commitments are an essential part of the OSCE's comprehensive approach to security.



At a time when media freedom is more under threat than ever before, we are committed to advancing initiatives focused on enhancing media literacy and ensuring the safety of journalists, with a special emphasis on the well-being and protection of female journalists, both online and offline.

Additionally, we will actively engage in endeavours to counter violence against women and combat human trafficking.

In the spirit of inclusivity, Malta will also place the region's one billion people at the centre of all OSCE initiatives. This approach will focus in particular on effectively mainstreaming gender and increasing the meaningful engagement of youth across all dimensions.

Madam President,

In concluding, this strategic focus reflects our commitment to proactively address the multifaceted security threats of our time, ensuring that the OSCE remains an effective organization that strengthens resilience and enhances security across the entire region.

In the path ahead, we are bound to encounter obstacles. However, our strong commitment to future generations will continue to guide us, as will our faith in dialogue and diplomacy, as we strive to secure a more peaceful and prosperous future.

Thank you.