

**Statement by Mr Jan Marian, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs,  
Czechia; 1443<sup>rd</sup> Reinforced Permanent Council Meeting, 26/9/2023**

Mr Chair,

Czechia aligns itself with the statement made by the European Union. In addition, I would like to make the following remarks in my national capacity.

The OSCE faces a major challenge, probably the biggest in its history.

Russia, with the complicity of Belarus, is waging a war of aggression against another participating State, trampling the most fundamental OSCE principles, as well as basic norms of international law.

In this situation, we have to ensure that the OSCE remains functional.

Participating States still have not decided on the Chairpersonship-in-Office for 2024, which is unprecedented.

There is only one candidate, Estonia. They are a very good candidate and they have the full support of Czechia.

Also, the OSCE Secretariat and the autonomous institutions need stability and continuity. They are the source of the OSCE expertise.

Secretary General Helga Schmid has been doing tremendous work in difficult circumstances and renewing her mandate, as well as the mandates of the heads of all three autonomous institutions, is the best solution in this situation.

Furthermore, we have to make sure that the OSCE Unified Budget is adopted and the OSCE receives the funds it needs to efficiently function across all three dimensions.

We all benefit from the work of the OSCE. It makes a difference on the ground in different regions of our continent. The OSCE's role as the pillar of collective security must be preserved. We must not allow anyone to dismantle what it took decades to achieve.

I hope we will be able to make the necessary decisions before the OSCE Ministerial Council meeting in Skopje.

We fully support the efforts of the Chairpersonship-in-Office of North Macedonia in this regard and I would like to thank North Macedonia for providing a strong leadership in these difficult times.

I would also like to thank North Macedonia for the efforts and resources it devoted to the 2023 Prague Forum on the Economic and Environmental Dimension of the OSCE, which was held earlier this month. We are very happy about the success of the event and hope that next year a full OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum will be held, as mandated by numerous Ministerial Council decisions and other OSCE documents.

Thank you.