



**Rappresentanza Permanente d'Italia
OSCE**

STATEMENT BY ITALY

CONFERENCE OF STATES PARTIES TO THE TREATY ON OPEN SKIES
VIENNA, 20 JULY 2021

Amb. Stefano Baldi

Thank you, Madame Chair, and thanks to the Depositories for convening this Conference.

We deeply regret the notification by the Russian Federation of its intent to withdraw from the Treaty on Open Skies. Italy agrees with previous speakers that the Treaty is one of the key elements of the confidence-building framework created over the past decades in order to improve transparency and security across the Euro-Atlantic area, and we are concerned by the risks of progressive erosion that this new development might entail.

On several occasions, we have reiterated our commitment to the Treaty and to the importance of ensuring its full implementation in accordance to its letter and spirit. We have repeatedly signalled our readiness to consult with the Russian Federation in order to address the implementation issues concerning, among other things, undue restrictions to implementation regarding flights over Kaliningrad and near its borders with Georgia.

On the fourth Open Skies Review Conference, and on subsequent formal and informal meetings, we - together with a group of States Parties - have constantly supported efforts aimed at initiating a constructive discussion upon all issues raised in the Open Skies Consultative Commission with regard to the implementation of the Treaty, with a view to addressing our respective concerns and eventually overcoming them. We are therefore disappointed by the Russian Federation's disregard towards those attempts, demonstrated also by the creation of artificial linkages with processes taking place outside of the Open Skies Treaty.

Nevertheless, I would like to avail myself of this opportunity to call upon the Russian Federation to reconsider a decision that is detrimental to our collective security and undermines our efforts to reinforce trust and confidence.

Madam Chair,

At last year's Conference of the State Parties, convened under similar circumstances, we expressed support for enhanced negotiations in the months to come in order to avoid further weakening of the Treaty. While I acknowledge that reiterating such a plea might ring hollow today, I believe that - more than ever before - the circumstances are calling us to a renewed commitment to the Treaty.

Allow me to reiterate Italy's full support to the Conventional Arms Control architecture. We need to maintain its viability, strengthen its implementation, find new ways to update it and adapt it to evolving and sometime challenging times, with a view to consolidate peace and security in the OSCE area.

We resolutely support the preservation of the confidence and security building measures, and the efforts to promote its reinforcement and adaptation. We also believe that, all together, we have to deal with the new challenges that the existing and deteriorated regimes are not able to address.

We will continue to do our part.

Thank you, Madam Chair.