



Permanent Mission of Italy
OSCE

Dichiarazione dell'Italia

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Excellencies, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am honored to address the 2019 OSCE Mediterranean Conference, representing my country, Italy, as member of the OSCE Troika and former Chairmanship of the OSCE.

At the outset, allow me to express my sincerest gratitude to the incoming Albanian Chairmanship of the Contact Group for hosting us, today, and organizing this event. We are sure that this Conference will pave the way for further successful initiatives of the Albanian OSCE Chairmanship in 2020.

Let me also thank the distinguished Slovak OSCE Chairmanship and all the Colleagues who have kicked off this Conference with thoughtful introductory remarks.

I would like to start my intervention by referring to the preliminary findings of the **report the network of "Mediterranean Experts on Climate and environmental Change"** presented, some days ago, at the Union for the Mediterranean.

The **highlights of this report** are telling: the warming effect in the Mediterranean region is 20% faster than the global average and, if additional measures to reduce greenhouse

gases are not taken, freshwater reserves could drop by 15% in just two decades. Furthermore, food safety could seriously affect more than 250 millions of people. By 2100 the waters of the Mediterranean will swell over a meter.

Should this scenario become reality, even partially, it would trigger further factors of instability for the region, whose negative impacts would certainly distress an area well beyond the Mediterranean.

This is just one of the many instances proving that "*the **link between security in the OSCE area and security in the Mediterranean region** has become all the more relevant, as has our co-operation with our Mediterranean Partners*".

This is exactly what our Foreign Ministers agreed upon last year in Milan.

In this regard, allow me to add that even the **tragic developments in Syria** show how much the complex crises unfolding in the Mediterranean are presenting challenges spilling over into the OSCE area, across all three dimensions of security. Indeed, we have to recognize that the Mediterranean has expanded, and the scope of its challenges has gone beyond its northern and southern shores.

Excellencies,

The **sea "in between the lands"**, cradle of some among the most advanced civilizations since ancient times, has preserved its long-standing character of a political, economic, social, cultural and religious crossroad over the centuries.

As such, the Mediterranean continues to exert **a fundamental influence** on our societies and **on the work of multilateral fora, such as the OSCE.**

The region embodies some of the most **pressing issues** of our days, such as political stability, migration flows, terrorism, illicit trafficking. Yet, Italy has traditionally rejected the narrow view of the Mediterranean as a source of **challenges**. It also embodies a unique **platform of opportunities** such as energy, environment protection, trade, tourism,

youth, and religious dialogue. A focus on opportunities does complement effectively any effort to deal with security needs.

For all those reasons, we are convinced that **the OSCE, in synergy with other relevant international actors, shall play a meaningful role** in fostering the cooperation for the “Mediterranean dimension” of security, while more adequate investment of human and financial resources are needed. Let me stress that our appeal is not “a call” in the exclusive interest of Mediterranean countries and their peoples. On the contrary, it looks at and address the interest of all participating States and partners.

At the OSCE, challenges and opportunities should translate into efforts to advance the **Mediterranean Partnership**, as this tool offers a unique instrument to develop an inclusive type of “Mediterranean dialogue”.

Excellencies,

Following the precious work carried out by other Chairmanships, Italy has succeeded to bring the Mediterranean back again on the agenda of the OSCE.

As 2018 OSCE Chairmanship, one of the greatest achievements was surely the adoption of the **Milan Declaration on Security and Co-Operation in the Mediterranean**. In this respect, allow me to thank, once more, those who supported this initiative and allowed us to achieve this important result. The Milan Declaration must serve as **a benchmark for our future cooperation** with Partners, insofar as it sets a blueprint for our work at the OSCE.

In this regard, I am pleased to commend the decision of the **OSCE Parliamentary Assembly** to convene the **fall session in Marrakesh**, further testimony to the growing awareness of the need to address and contend with the security link that I have evoked at the outset of my speech.

In order to mark and celebrate the 25th Anniversary of the Mediterranean Contact Group, we firmly believe that it is the right time to build upon the commitments of our Ministers.

First, our Ministers called for "*Med-related issues to be clearly reflected throughout the relevant work of the OSCE across the three dimensions*". As a way to put in practice this call for "mainstreaming" Med-related issues within and across the three dimensions, I would like to suggest that OSCE Secretary General could **periodically report to the Permanent Council**, at least once per year, on how this provision be implemented by all the relevant Executive Structures of the Organization.

Second, we all know that Mediterranean Partners are invited to take part in the weekly meetings of the Permanent Council. In this regard, allow me to propose that, once per year, **a Permanent Council will be entirely devoted** to the security in the Mediterranean, in relation to topics relevant for the OSCE. This annual venue should become an established practice.

Third, we are convinced that a sense of ownership, responsibility and engagement could be further advanced within the Contact Group. To this end, we see merit in introducing some form of "**co-chairing**" of the **Contact Group**, where the Chairmanship is held by one participating State – the incoming OSCE Chairmanship - and one Partner country, on the basis of a consensual decision among the Mediterranean Partners or a rotation system.

In addition, coming back to the need for synergies with other international actors, we would favor the establishment of **a "Reflection Group" of experts** tasked to identify and make recommendations about the added value of the OSCE for the security in the Mediterranean.

Finally, allow me to stress that the instrument of the "**Partnership Fund**" appears to be **inadequate** for its purpose, especially due to the limitations on its use in the territories of our partners.

I would like to express my appreciation for the topics selected for the thematic sessions of today's conference. All those items are indeed of particular relevance to us all.

At this stage, I would like to stress that, within the work of the OSCE, Italy has established and funded **a number of extra-budgetary projects** linked to the topics in Agenda.

Let me focus, for example, on the promotion of **youth participation and engagement**. The Mediterranean is among the youngest regions in the OSCE, and capitalizing on this potential is our duty in order to invest in peace and stability.

In this respect, Italy has financed an **ODIHR training course addressed to young civil servants** from the six partners. The training aims to strengthen the participants' knowledge of democratic institutions and OSCE commitments in the field of democratic governance. The course will be held in November, at the European University Institute in **Florence**.

Allow me also to mention the **OSCE GEMS Award** that Italy granted to six young entrepreneurs from each of the Mediterranean Partners for projects in the field of green economy and sustainable development, as well as the **"NewMed Youth initiative"**, a platform for a selected number of young representatives from the Mediterranean partners to articulate their thoughts and individually present their views on a number of socio-cultural and security-related themes in the Mediterranean.

While not included in the topics of today's Conference, I reckon that the issue of **migration** does remain one of crucial importance within the region and in the cooperation with our Mediterranean partners. In this regard, I am pleased to mention the success of the project **"Combating Human Trafficking along Mediterranean Migration Routes"**, organized by the Office of the OSCE Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings in cooperation with the Italian COESPU – **Carabinieri** Center of Excellence for Stability Police Units, in **Vicenza** - and mainly funded by Italy. It is worth recalling that the training also included participants from six Partners for Co-operation as well as from six West African countries, a telling indication of how effective and appreciated can be the OSCE model and approach in the prevention and mitigation of security challenges.

Indeed, we should strive to continue promoting tailored initiatives and projects, aiming at fostering sustainable results and avoiding duplication of efforts. We encourage all participating States to look into such initiatives and to develop and support capacity-building projects going into this direction.

Excellencies,

I would like to close my speech by recalling once again that the Mediterranean dimension of security presents both challenges and opportunities. In the face of such scenario, we all are required to commit ourselves to a renewed and deeper partnership and a long-term vision. It is up to us, the participating States of the OSCE community - one that has been built and nurtured upon the principles of dialogue and cooperation - to take the necessary steps to address those challenges and seize the many opportunities.

I am confident that events like the 2019 OSCE Mediterranean Conference will bring us closer to our ultimate goal, which should be to make best use of the Partnership tool.

I do hope that building upon concrete proposals for action and turning objectives and hopes into realities could guide us into a better future.

I wish you all a successful Conference.