



Rappresentanza Permanente d'Italia
OSCE

AMB. STEFANO BALDI

ITALY'S STATEMENT AT THE CONFERENCE

“ODIHR: three decades and ready for the future. Democracy, human rights and security”

Warsaw, 14-15 October 2021

First of all, allow me to thank the Swedish OSCE Chairpersonship, Poland as host country and ODIHR for organising this Conference.

In addition to the statement of the European Union, I would like to reiterate in a national capacity the great importance and strong support that Italy attaches to the human dimension of the OSCE comprehensive approach to security and to the work of ODIHR in particular.

Thanks to its independent, transparent and impartial mandate, ODIHR plays a leading role in strengthening democracy, human rights and the rule of law in the OSCE area and in supporting all participating States in the implementation of our shared commitments. In particular, ODIHR's electoral observation missions and their recommendations provide for an authoritative and independent assessment, which is essential to strengthen democratic processes across the OSCE region.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Director Matteo Mecacci and all ODIHR staff for all their tireless and invaluable work.

Italy strongly supports the international and regional legal frameworks and mechanisms to protect and promote human rights and we actively work to mainstream human rights into our laws, policies and practice. As stated in the Helsinki Final Act in 1975 and subsequent OSCE documents, Italy remains firmly convinced that respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms in open and inclusive democratic societies, free from

intolerance and discrimination, is essential to guarantee the security, prosperity and well-being of our countries and our citizens.

Over the past thirty years, there have been many achievements in the protection of human rights, democracy and the rule of law in the OSCE area. Nevertheless, shortcomings persist and new challenges continue to arise, including the use of new technologies and digital tools, as well as a worrying trend of shrinking space for civil society participation worldwide.

Italy is proud to support ODIHR's activities in addressing these shortcomings and challenges and is thankful for the support received over the course of the last thirty years to strengthen and develop our human rights framework at the national level.

Among the latest examples of such fruitful and intense collaboration, I would like to mention Italy's participation in the first cycle of country-specific assessment led by ODIHR on the situation of human rights defenders in the OSCE area, as well as Italy's financial support to ODIHR's work to promote the rights of women and girls and to advance gender equality.

In the coming months, ODIHR will work together with the Italian Ministry of Justice to provide training programmes for penitentiary staff in Italy, on the Nelson Mandela Rules for the treatment of prisoners.

As we celebrate the 30th anniversary of the establishment of ODIHR, let me also mention that the very first Director of ODIHR from 1991 to 1994 was Luchino Cortese, an Italian diplomat who gave an invaluable contribution to the shaping of the Institution.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate our strong appreciation for the organisation of this Conference, which gives us the opportunity to reflect on the importance of ODIHR's work in the last three decades and for the years to come.