



Rappresentanza Permanente d'Italia
OSCE

AMB. STEFANO BALDI

**ITALY'S STATEMENT
AT THE OSCE MEDITERRANEAN PARTNERS FOR CO-OPERATION GROUP MEETING
“Enforcing Rule of Law and Combating Corruption in an action-oriented approach,
focusing on Asset Recovery”**

Vienna, 8 May 2023

Mr Chair,

Italy aligns with the statement delivered by the European Union and would like to add some additional remarks in a national capacity.

First of all, I would like to wholeheartedly thank Finland for agreeing to act *ad interim* as the Chairperson of Mediterranean Partners Group until a decision on the OSCE Chairpersonship for 2024 is taken. I would like to assure you of Italy's strong support.

Indeed, the Mediterranean Conference in Amman last October, under the able leadership of North Macedonia and with the kind hospitality of Jordan, clearly recognised that the OSCE Mediterranean Partnership represents a unique forum for dialogue and cooperation in these uncertain and difficult times. The major threat to European security today represented by the Russian Federation's war of aggression against Ukraine has severe consequences across the OSCE region and beyond, affecting our Mediterranean Partners in many different ways. At the same time, it offers new opportunities for engagement and cooperation across the two shores of the Mediterranean: from climate change to energy security and connectivity.

We remain deeply convinced and profoundly attached to the continued relevance and value of the OSCE Mediterranean Partnership. We look forward to working together with Finland, other OSCE Participating States and the Mediterranean partners to drive our Partnership forward and make it useful and meaningful for our countries and our people.

Mr Chair,

The topic of the fight against corruption and asset recovery – chosen for today's meeting – is one clear example of how and where the OSCE can offer a clear added value to our Mediterranean Partnership, building on a solid track record of delivering opportunities for regional cooperation and capacity building.

Italy put the fight against corruption at the centre of its 2018 OSCE Chairmanship, through the appointment of the first OSCE Special Representative on combating corruption, Professor Paola Severino.

We have been contributing both financially and with in-kind expertise to the OSCE flagship project on asset recovery in the Western Balkans promoted by the Transnational Threats Department (TNTD) and the Office of the Coordinator on Economic and Environmental Activities (OCEEA) since 2020. Indeed, only two weeks ago, thanks to the excellent cooperation between the OSCE and Italy's Guardia di Finanza, we hosted in Rome a very successful training for criminal justice practitioners, focused on financial investigations and asset recovery, as well as regional and international co-operation.

We heard today that this is an area where Mediterranean partners are interested in and look forward to enhanced cooperation with the OSCE. It is important that we finally deliver and meet their expectations. Italy stands ready to give its support.

Thank you.