

**STATEMENT BY H.E. MR. GABRIELIUS LANDSBERGIS,
MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE REPUBLIC OF LITHUANIA
1401st OSCE Permanent Council, 8 December 2022, Vienna**

Your Excellency Ambassador Hałaciński,

Madam Secretary General,

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my honour to address the OSCE Permanent Council. Let me express my appreciation to Ambassador Hałaciński for the invitation.

I also wish to thank the Polish OSCE Chairmanship-in-Office for the principled position throughout this entire year, the most difficult year since the birth of the organization.

Our words can offer solace to Ukraine, but they are not enough to stop Russia's war and atrocities. The real litmus test is the way we respond to this aggression, because the degree of our commitment to Ukraine is a sign how committed we are to our own values.

Ukraine will win this war and we will stand with it as long as it takes. Yet for this victory to come sooner we need to take action in increasing our support.

First and foremost, we should step up our military assistance to Ukraine.

Many of our countries have been providing Ukraine with significant military support already. However, the magnitude and brutality of Russia's aggression call for much more. Ukraine should get all the military assistance it needs and asks for, and should get it now.

Second, we must make an extra effort to help Ukraine survive this winter, as Russia continues to target Ukraine's critical infrastructure, aiming to punish Ukrainians – in the most cynical way – for their determination to defend their own country.

There are many ways to do so – from sending power generators and spare parts, to continuing financial and humanitarian assistance, to providing advanced air defence systems to help prevent further damage.

Third, we must increase pressure on the aggressor Russia and its accomplice Belarus – through their further international isolation and additional sanctions.

As long as this war of aggression continues, the aggressor states and their representatives should not find a place at this table, which was meant to provide a place for dialogue among states.

Fourth, ensuring accountability. The vicious circle of Russia's impunity will not be broken if top political and military leadership were allowed to escape accountability. While the International Criminal Court should try those responsible for war crimes, genocide and crimes against humanity in Ukraine, a special international tribunal backed by the United Nations should be established to prosecute the crime of aggression against Ukraine.

Mr Chairman,

Inability of the international system to prevent the war and help the victim of Russia's aggression should also force us to ask some fundamental questions around this table.

While there is a coalition of states that pushes back against Russia's blatant aggression, shouldn't that also be a primary role of the global and European security architecture. The very institutions that were created to prevent and act against the kind of assault that is currently ongoing in our region? To enforce the "never again" – words that dot countless killing fields from Auschwitz to Katyn, from Srebrenica to Bucha to who knows where next?

After all, institutions should be there to prevent the conflict from igniting, to protect the victim by countering the abuser, to ensure justice and accountability for the wrongs committed.

Many of us would agree that so far we have failed to achieve that, including here at the OSCE.

Is the OSCE still able to stand for the fundamental principles of the Helsinki Final Act – sovereignty, territorial integrity, inviolability of borders and prohibition to illegal use force?

Are we still an institution that has the will and means to ensure respect for those principles?

At the very least, this should prompt a serious rethinking of what causes us to fail so repeatedly and what we need to change.

For decades the consensus-based decision-making was considered a major strength of the OSCE. Alas, it is efficient only when good will and unity of purpose exists on all sides. But once a heavily armed member state attempts to invade its neighbour, the consensus rule paralyses our decision-making capacity. The situation is very similar

with the veto power wielded by the aggressor at the UN Security Council. Russia has turned both the OSCE consensus rule and UNSC veto power into tools of blocking international decision-making and action in response to aggression. Inability of the OSCE Ministerial Council to take any decisions last week is but one telling example.

Let us use this situation to make the OSCE stronger.

We need a security architecture capable to prevent and deter conflicts effectively, that does not shut down when a real aggression occurs.

We have to decide whether the Helsinki Final Act principles are guidelines or rules. If we have committed to a set of rules, there should be no more ambiguity when these principles are violated. Either we stand by those principles, or we don't.

We must also critically assess why the OSCE's conflict cycle toolbox did not work to prevent and counter Russia's aggression.

If the tools were not as comprehensive as we all thought – let us strengthen them.

If there was not enough political will to act – let us build it.

If States constantly abuse the consensus rule – let us figure the way out, too.

We must help Ukraine win this war and restore the respect for the rules-based international order and principles of international relations established by the Helsinki Final Act back in 1975.

Upholding the OSCE's principles and commitments remains a top priority, and a key prerequisite to rebuild trust among OSCE countries. We should not allow aggressors' actions destroy the entire OSCE security framework.

If we find a will to acknowledge that the current system needs overview, then let's organize a conference of countries concerned about Russia's aggression, concerned about Ukraine, concerned about democratic back-sliding and re-emergence of autocracy and discuss how do we make European security architecture reliable, effective and viable.

I thank you for your attention.