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Video Message by the OSCE Secretary General Feridun H. Sinirlioğlu

FSC Security Dialogue

'Incident Management: Mitigating Risks of Unintended Escalation'

Vienna, 4 Nov 2026

Excellencies, Distinguished delegates,

I welcome the United Kingdom's initiative to hold a Security Dialogue on **incident management**. In today's volatile security environment, preventing incidents from further escalating is an **urgent priority**.

This Organization – this Forum – was created precisely to manage times like these. To this end, it developed unique tools. We must rediscover them, and ensure that **they remain relevant**, **available and ready to use**.

Fifteen years ago, participating States adopted **Ministerial Council Decision 3/11** on "Elements of the Conflict Cycle". Its commitments remain highly relevant in today's difficult and unpredictable environment. You entrusted me with a mandate on **early warning**. I take this responsibility very seriously. And so do our field operations, who continue to report to you when tensions arise. This strengthens our situational awareness, allowing us to better inform and support timely and preventive responses.

We also have **politico-military tools**, such as the Vienna Document, the Annual Exchange of Military Information, and the Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security. These instruments were developed to increase transparency and strengthen confidence- and security-building among participating States.

Let's look, for example, at **Chapter 3 of the Vienna Document**. It provides a practical risk reduction mechanism. It gives all of you a chance to request explanations about military activities that you regard as significant outside normal peacetime locations. There should be no hesitation in using it. Its purpose is to provide reassurance to us all.

We also have other tools that can help avoid low level incidents from becoming something more serious. The Stabilizing Measures for Localized Crises Situations, fact-finding missions, needs assessments, and other expert missions. These can help establish facts on the ground and inform decisions. **These tools matter today**.

Distinguished delegates,
The continued escalation of the **war in Ukraine** is taking a devastating human toll. Attacks on civilian infrastructure threaten essential services for millions of people as another harsh winter approaches. The consequences of the war are felt across our region and beyond. Attacks on commercial vessels have made the Black Sea one of the world's most dangerous waters with significant loss of life. Repeated drone incursions into the airspace of neighbouring participating States raise the risk of miscalculation and escalation.

Colleagues,
We cannot prevent every incident. But we *should* do everything in our power to **prevent incidents from escalating**. We *can* reduce risks. We *can* avoid miscalculation. **The tools are there**. The channels of communication are there. The platforms for dialogue and mutual accountability are there. Norway's work through the Structured Dialogue is one example of how we can make use of them.

We do not need to reinvent the tools. But we should be ready to **adapt them** to the new realities we face today.

The non-paper I shared in June offers some ideas in this regard. What we need is **political will**. To share information. To seek clarification. To talk and to listen. Even when our interests do not align.

This is our **collective responsibility**. Building a more secure region starts with small steps. With inclusive dialogue. With transparency. And with a willingness to use the tools available to all of you.

Let us take those steps again. Let us build on it. And let us use what this Organization has to offer.

Thank you.