

**Press remarks – Joint press point with Chair-in-Office Valtonen
OSCE Secretary General**

16 January 2025, Helsinki

Good morning,

Thank you for your words and kind introduction, Minister Valtonen. Congratulations to you and your team for the launch of the 2025 Finnish Chairpersonship and for your successful first visit to Ukraine and Moldova last week.

Indeed, I can only reiterate the sentiment you expressed, Minister Valtonen: I am looking forward to working together to strengthen this vital Organization and to foster safety and security across the OSCE region.

I would like to once again express my gratitude to Finland for agreeing to Chair the Organization in such a critical year. Indeed, 2025 marks the 50th anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act, our founding document. This milestone highlights many decades of experience facilitating dialogue, mediation and co-operation between our 57 participating States – even when, or rather especially when, they do not see eye to eye. As you [Chairperson-in-Office, Finnish Foreign Minister Elina Valtonen] said, diplomacy is the core mandate of this Organization.

And while we continue to confront the challenges we face as an Organization, we cannot ignore the important work that the OSCE continues to do across our region. Our staff from the Secretariat and the Institutions to those on the ground, continue to deliver real and

tangible impact. I am honoured to be working with such a dedicated group of individuals.

Our people are what make the OSCE. And on this topic, the immediate release of our three colleagues, Vadym Golda, Maxim Petrov and Dmytro Shabanov, who have been detained in Donetsk and Luhansk for more than one thousand days will remain a top priority for me as Secretary General.

There are difficulties to overcome, both inside the OSCE and across the region, but I believe that under your able leadership, we will succeed as an Organization. I am ready to do my part in steering the OSCE and supporting the Chair and the 57 participating States in ensuring that we continue to deliver for the over one billion people we serve.

Thank you Minister Valtonen.