



**Second day of the Sixteenth Meeting**  
MC(16) Journal No. 2, Agenda item 8

**MINISTERIAL DECLARATION ON  
THE OCCASION OF THE 60th ANNIVERSARY OF THE UNIVERSAL  
DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS**

We, the members of the Ministerial Council of the OSCE, reaffirm our strong commitment to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (“the Universal Declaration”), adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 10 December 1948.

On the occasion of the 60th anniversary of the adoption of the Universal Declaration, we recommit ourselves to act in conformity with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

In the spirit of the Helsinki Final Act, we underline the principles guiding relations between participating States enshrined therein, in particular the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.

We stress that all human rights are universal.

We remain committed to respecting the inherent dignity of the human being, as recognized in the Universal Declaration and relevant OSCE documents to which we have agreed.

We declare that the rights contained in the Universal Declaration remain relevant.

We reaffirm to ensure the full implementation of the OSCE human dimension commitments. All OSCE commitments without exception apply equally to each participating State.

We reaffirm the inseparable connection between ensuring respect for human rights and maintaining peace, justice, well-being for peoples and stability, as recognized by the OSCE concept of common and comprehensive security.

Taking into account the principles guiding relations between participating States enshrined in the Helsinki Final Act, we reaffirm that the commitments undertaken in the field of the OSCE human dimension are matters of direct and legitimate concern to all participating States and do not belong exclusively to the internal affairs of the State concerned as stipulated in the 1991 Moscow document.

We recognize the valuable contribution of the OSCE in promoting and protecting the rights enshrined in the Universal Declaration. We recognize, in particular, the work of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) in assisting the participating States, in accordance with its mandate, in implementing human dimension commitments.

On the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the Office of the Representative on Freedom of the Media, we recognize the work of this institution in promoting independent and pluralistic media essential to a free and open society and accountable systems of government. We call on participating States and Partners for Co-operation to create an environment where free and independent media can flourish.

On the occasion of the 15th anniversary of the High Commissioner on National Minorities, we recognize the role played by the High Commissioner.

We remain committed to undertake to build, consolidate and strengthen democracy in our countries.

We remain committed to the rule of law and equal protection under the law for all, based on respect for human rights and effective, accessible and just legal systems.

We stress that everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person; no one shall be held in slavery, and no one shall be subjected to torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

We recognize that human rights are best respected in democratic societies, where decisions are taken with maximum transparency and broad participation. We support a pluralistic civil society and encourage partnerships between different stakeholders in the promotion and protection of human rights.

We reiterate that everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience, religion or belief; freedom of opinion and expression, freedom of peaceful assembly and association. The exercise of these rights may be subject to only such limitations as are provided by law and consistent with our obligations under international law and with our international commitments.