



Permanent Delegation of Sweden
to the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

National statement by Sweden
Warsaw Human Dimension Conference 2024
Opening session
30 September 2024

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Mr./Madame Chair,

Sweden aligns itself with the EU statement and would like to make a statement in our national capacity.

1. We thank the Maltese Chairpersonship and ODIHR for organizing this year's Warsaw Human Dimension Conference, in lieu of the mandated Human Dimension Implementation Meeting, which was blocked once again by Russia and Belarus.
2. We appreciate this opportunity to meet and discuss the implementation of our OSCE commitments and international obligations. All OSCE participating States have committed to hold each other accountable, recognizing that democracy and human rights are legitimate concerns to all and do not belong exclusively to the internal affairs of the State concerned. This meeting is a central platform to do so.
3. We especially appreciate the opportunity to meet with civil society representatives and human rights defenders from across the OSCE area. We acknowledge that many of you participate at a great personal risk.

Mr./Madame Chair,

4. Once again, we gather while **Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine** continues unabated. Sweden condemns Russia's aggression, its blatant violations of international human rights law, international humanitarian law and OSCE core commitments and principles in the strongest possible terms. We also condemn Belarus' support to Russia. Accountability must and will be ensured. The OSCE and its accountability tools including through ODIHR, the Moscow and Vienna Mechanisms and its open approach to civil society are important contributions to this end. We reiterate our demand that Russia

immediately releases all individuals unlawfully deprived of liberty, including the three arbitrarily detained OSCE officials.

5. **Russia's** external aggression against Ukraine and its internal repression go hand in hand. Russia is accelerating the crackdown on civil society, silencing human rights defenders and any voices opposing the war against Ukraine.
6. In **Belarus**, the situation is worse than ever for those who dare to voice any criticism of the system. We strongly condemn the unprecedented level of repression against all segments of society. The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights has stated that some of the violations of international human rights law may also amount to crimes against humanity. We reiterate our call for the immediate and unconditional release and effective rehabilitation of all political prisoners in the country.
7. In **Georgia**, the Law on Transparency of Foreign Influence is incompatible with European norms and values. We were also disappointed by the adoption in the third reading on September 17 of the legislative package on family values restricting the enjoyment of human rights of LGBTQI persons and other Georgians, ignoring the advice of the Venice commission to reconsider this legislative proposal entirely and to not proceed with its adoption.
8. In **Azerbaijan**, there has been an unsettling rise in arrests of independent journalists, human rights defenders and political activists on politically motivated charges. This includes cases such as Abzas Media, Toplum TV, Gubad Ibadoghlu, Anar Mammadli, Iqbal Abilov and others. We call on Azerbaijan to ensure all its citizens due processes in line with their commitments to the OSCE and to release all those imprisoned for exercising their fundamental rights. We encourage the participation of free and independent civil society at COP29 in Baku in November.

Mr./Madame Chair,

9. We recall that human rights, democracy and the rule of law are at the core of the comprehensive concept of security. There can be no security without respect for our obligations and commitments in this field. In the context of increasing challenges to human rights and democracy in our region, the work of the autonomous institutions is crucial.



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10. We look forward to discussing these issues in the upcoming two weeks, and we encourage all participating States to engage openly and constructively.

I thank you.