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Vienna, 25 July 2017

Alyn Ware
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Re: Letter to the OSCE CiO Minister Sebastian Kurz

Dear Mr. Ware,

On behalf of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office, Austrian Federal Minister for Europe, Integration and Foreign Affairs I thank you for transmitting the letter of the *Parliamentarians for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament* dated 14 July 2017.

The Austrian Chairmanship of the OSCE fully shares the concerns regarding security challenges for Europe as expressed in the Parliamentarians' letter. This is why we have defined as one of our key priorities defusing existing conflicts in the OSCE area, including in and around Ukraine, as well as countering a fundamental lack of mutual trust and confidence between partners. We believe that these priorities can contribute to strengthening the OSCE, the main organization outside the UN bringing together all major partners involved in European security. It is our firm belief that a strong OSCE continues to be the basis for a secure Europe.

Building on the Hamburg Ministerial Council Declaration "From Lisbon to Hamburg: Declaration on the Twentieth Anniversary of the OSCE Framework for Arms Control" Chairperson-in-Office Minister Kurz also launched in February 2017 the so-called Structured Dialogue on the Current and Future Challenges and Risks to Security in the OSCE area to address the multiple challenges stemming from today's volatile security situation.

Arms control and disarmament are long-standing priorities of Austrian foreign policy and our position against nuclear weapons and proliferation remains firm: we continue to advocate for the total, worldwide elimination of all nuclear weapons. As an important first step towards a nuclear weapon free world, on July 7, at the United Nations headquarters, a majority of the States have adopted the new Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. Following the ban on biological and chemical weapons, the new treaty finally prohibits the most devastating weapons of mass destruction and provides a framework for further progress in nuclear disarmament. We are confident that with this treaty and together with our partners, we have succeeded in overcoming the long-standing multilateral nuclear disarmament standstill.

Both as Chairmanship of the OSCE and in our bilateral efforts on arms control as well as on banning nuclear weapons, we hope that we can count on the support of the Parliamentarians for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'F. Raunig', with a stylized flourish extending to the right.

Florian Raunig
Ambassador
Head of Task Force OSCE Chairmanship 2017