



Czech Republic

Statement by the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs for Security and Multilateral Issues

H.E. Ivo Šrámek

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Mr. Chairman, Mr. Secretary-General, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to join the long line of previous speakers in expressing our appreciation of the Austrian Chairmanship-in-Office for its skilful leadership and work done, including the successful conclusion of the appointment process of the four most senior OSCE positions.

It was an intensive year with the crisis in and around Ukraine remaining on top of our agenda. The Czech Republic fully supports the sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence of Ukraine within its internationally recognised borders and strongly condemns the illegal annexation of Crimea and Sevastopol by the Russian Federation, which we will not recognise. We strongly support the continued multiple engagement of the OSCE in relation to the crisis. The Special Monitoring Mission is a centrepiece of our collective efforts to achieve a peaceful resolution of the conflict. Regrettably, we are still very far from achieving this goal. We are concerned by the lack of progress in even basic steps of the Minsk process as the maintenance of ceasefire, withdrawal of heavy weapons and demining. This has not only a direct impact on the security situation on the ground but it multiplies suffering of the civilian population in and around the conflict zone. This also impacts on the safety and security of monitors as we were painfully reminded by the tragic incident in April. The safety and security of monitors is a must, as well as their full and unhindered

access throughout eastern Ukraine, including to the Russian-Ukrainian border, which is now denied by the separatists.

The Czech Republic also fully supports the OSCE's role in addressing the protracted conflicts in Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and in and around Nagorno-Karabakh, including the established negotiating formats and their efforts to reach sustainable political solutions in line with OSCE principles.

On Structured Dialogue on the current and future challenges and risks to security in the OSCE area, thanks to the efforts of the German Chair of the Informal Group we have been able to discuss the causes of deterioration of our shared security environment. We know the dialogue so far has only underscored the need to address decisively the unresolved conflicts in the OSCE area, which are the principal cause of distrust and violation of our fundamental principles and commitments. In this respect, we see Donbass as a test case to show what chances there are for reviving our cooperative security.

Regarding the Human Dimension I reiterate the full support of the Czech Republic for the mandates and independence of the OSCE autonomous institutions and their adequate resourcing. Respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms as well as a vibrant civil society and free media are at the core of the OSCE comprehensive security. That is also why we focused on their promotion during the Czech Chairmanship in the Council of Europe and why we were looking for possible synergies between the two organisations.

By concluding I would like to wish the forthcoming Italian Chairmanship-in-Office a lot of success and would like to assure them of the Czech Republic's full support.

Thank you.