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**STATEMENT BY MR. IGNACIO YBÁÑEZ,
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF SPAIN,
AT THE TWENTY-SECOND MEETING OF THE
OSCE MINISTERIAL COUNCIL**

Belgrade, 3 and 4 December 2015

Mr. Chairperson,

I should like to thank the Serbian Chairmanship for its efforts to make the work of the OSCE more effective in the face of the crises in the region.

This year marks the 40th anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act and the 70th anniversary of the Charter of the United Nations. Both of these anniversaries arrive in a particularly complex international context. The principles and values enshrined in these two documents, which were recently reaffirmed by United Nations General Assembly resolution 70/3 supported by Spain, are the key to peaceful international relations.

In the conflict in and around Ukraine, Spain continues to advocate a political solution and the full implementation of the Minsk agreements. Respect for the territorial integrity of Ukraine in accordance with international law and the country's national legislation is imperative. We support all diplomatic efforts aimed at achieving this political solution, particularly those under the Normandy format. We support the work of the OSCE and its Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine, in which Spain is participating. It is vital for the Mission to have access without impediment to the entire territory of Ukraine, including the areas bordering the Russian Federation.

Security in the OSCE region must be based on mutual confidence. We must also strengthen the instruments on which our security is founded, and it is therefore essential for us to modernize the Vienna Document in 2016.

The international community and our region are confronted by enormous challenges such as jihadist terrorism and the massive movements of people fleeing war and terrorism. The magnitude of these challenges calls for determination, perseverance and united action.

Terrorism is a particularly serious threat. I should like to express our most profound solidarity with all of the victims of terrorist attacks. Paris, Beirut, Tunisia, Nigeria, Cameroon and the skies above Sinai, to mention but a few of the places where attacks have taken place recently, demonstrate that we are dealing with a ruthless enemy acting on a global scale. We are all potential victims. States and international organizations must join and co-ordinate efforts to defeat it. Our country spoke out against violent extremism on behalf of the victims

in the United Nations Security Council in October. In July, we organized a meeting in Madrid of the Security Council Counter-Terrorism Committee on stemming the flow of foreign terrorist fighters. Prevention should be a priority area in addressing the phenomenon of terrorism, with a focus on youth, who are the pool from which terrorist groups recruit their members. Spain has pioneered major initiatives for prevention and interreligious and intercultural dialogue. We are the co-ordinators of the OSCE Group of Friends of Youth and will place all of our experience at the Organization's disposal.

We are facing the worst refugee crisis since the Second World War. The number of refugees and displaced persons is in excess of 60 million. The Mediterranean and the countries surrounding it have been transformed into a transit route for tens of thousands of people fleeing conflicts such as those in Syria, South Sudan, the Central African Republic, Libya and Mali. We need to step up co-operation with the countries of origin and transit. It is essential to put an end to the wars that are devastating Africa and the Middle East. Spain is working to make progress towards this aim from within the United Nations Security Council.

Spain advocates strengthening the OSCE's Euro-Mediterranean dimension on the basis of the Declaration adopted in Basel last year. We regret the inability here to reach agreement on a declaration on the Mediterranean Partners, which is even more important in the face of challenges posed by the terrorism of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant/Daesh and other organizations, or the massive movements of people. We must look to the south and act together to find joint solutions to shared problems. It might perhaps be useful to consider appointing an OSCE Special Representative for the Mediterranean region.

These challenges call for co-ordinated action, not only within the OSCE, but also in co-operation with other regional organizations and, in particular, with the United Nations. We encourage the strengthening of co-operation between the OSCE and the United Nations in accordance with Chapter VIII of the Charter signed in San Francisco.

We are concerned at the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and the possibility of their falling into the hands of terrorist organizations. Spain supported the creation of the Group of Friends of Resolution 1540. The 1540 Committee is chaired by the Ambassador of Spain to the United Nations, who spoke in May at a meeting of the OSCE Forum for Security Co-operation. As regards the comprehensive revision of resolution 1540 in 2016, we hope to be able to count on the close co-operation of the OSCE and on the benefits of its regional perspective.

I cannot but emphasize the strong link between human rights and security. Peace and stability are closely connected with respect for fundamental rights and the rule of law. We must all commit ourselves without reserve to using the *acquis* that the OSCE has been acquiring with regard to rights and freedoms and which has such a pre-eminent place in our Organization's profile. I should like to take this opportunity to welcome the decision of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights to observe the general election taking place on 20 December in Spain.

In conclusion, I should like to express our support to Germany in its difficult and responsible task of chairing the OSCE in 2016. I am sure that its leadership will be capable of reliably steering the Organization.