

**22nd OSCE Ministerial Council
Belgrade, 3-4 December 2015**

ENGLISH only

**Address by the Secretary of State of Foreign Affairs
and Cooperation of Portugal,
Mrs. Teresa Ribeiro**

Mr. Chairman,

I join others in conveying condolences to the United States and the American people in light of the tragedy in San Bernardino.

I would like to start by praising the Serbian Chairmanship of the OSCE during this challenging year. I am also grateful for your kind hospitality.

Mr. Chairman,

Portugal subscribes to the statement delivered by the European Union High Representative.

The commemoration of the fortieth anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act in the current year reminds us of our responsibility to abide by the principles we pledged to respect as signatories of that truly historic document as well as of the Charter of Paris. It is incumbent upon us to recommit ourselves to those very principles, which are the bedrock of our security, and to their implementation.

The situation in and around Ukraine brought back tensions we thought outdated. Full adherence by all participating States, in good faith, to the OSCE principles and commitments, is paramount to overcome the situation.

We commend the continued engagement of the OSCE in Ukraine in reducing tensions and in fostering peace and stability. Its contribution confirms its key role as a forum for dialogue and a platform for action on comprehensive security in Europe. Portugal reiterates its support to the Chairmanship tireless efforts, as well as to the role of the Special Monitoring Mission, of the Special Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office in the Trilateral Contact Group and of the relevant Executive Structures. In the crisis, and in overall context of European security, we praise the work of the autonomous institutions. We also support the Normandy format in creating the conditions for the implementation of the Minsk agreements.

The swift and full implementation of these agreements is fundamental in achieving a lasting solution with full respect for the independence, the sovereignty and the territorial integrity of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders. We call on all sides to abide by their commitments, to put an end to human suffering and to the senseless destruction. We are particularly concerned about the humanitarian situation in some parts of Donbas and we underline the urgency of ensuring full access to aid agencies.

Mr Chairman,

The terrorist attacks across the OSCE area and in its neighbourhood in 2015 are attacks against our common values and the fundamental principles of our societies. Portugal joins others in condemning these acts of indiscriminate violence.

We have to be stronger in our determination to fight terrorism, clearer in our messages and incisive in our actions. The OSCE has an important role to play, joining efforts with other international and regional organizations. And in this regard I want to thank the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Malta for highlighting the importance of working with our Mediterranean Partners for Cooperation. Following the two declarations we adopted last year in Basel, on kidnapping for ransom and foreign terrorist fighters, we expect we can continue to build upon our commitments on countering terrorism and in preventing and countering violent extremism and radicalization.

Fighting terrorism requires a sustained and comprehensive approach, that fully respects human rights and the rule of law, and that fosters mutual understanding in our societies. Building inclusive societies, where tolerance among different communities prevails, is essential in preventing and fighting terrorism. Also here the OSCE can play an important role in assisting participating States in promoting interreligious, interfaith and intercultural dialogue.

Mr. Chairman,

The ongoing flow of migrants and refugees is another challenge we have to address in a comprehensive way, with responsibility and solidarity and, indeed, fully respecting our human rights' commitments. Giving an adequate response to it requires cooperation among us to address the root causes of the phenomenon. At the same time, there are opportunities to be seized arising from a humane and effective migration governance.

We welcome the determination of the OSCE in looking for opportunities to join efforts with other actors in addressing the situation. Among other

aspects, Portugal believes that the expertise of the OSCE in combatting trafficking of human beings can be developed in the present context.

Mr. Chairman,

I congratulate Germany and Austria for their upcoming Chairmanships. Much as we believe that the "Helsinki plus 40 process" fell short from our expectations, we welcome Germany's and Austria's intention to pursue a flexible and open-ended dialogue on security and cooperation in Europe. We encourage also a reflection on the greater involvement of our Partners for Cooperation in our works, like the Mediterranean Partners, considering that the security of the OSCE is inextricably linked to that of adjacent areas.

Furthermore, the security situation in Europe demands our unequivocal engagement with the OSCE's mechanisms, in particular those designed to reduce tensions and increase transparency and predictability.

As one of next year's Chairs of the Forum for Security and Cooperation, Portugal is ready to pursue efforts to revitalize the arms' control and confidence building measures regimes, including having in mind reissuing the Vienna Document in 2016. We believe that progress is possible by means of an inclusive dialogue among all participating States and we trust we will find good collaboration from all of you.

I conclude by conveying Portugal's best wishes of success to the incoming Chairmanship and by assuring Germany that it can count on our full support.

I thank you.