

**21st OSCE Ministerial Council
Basel, 4-5 December 2014**

**Address by the Minister of State and Foreign Affairs of Portugal
Mr. Rui Machete**

Mr. Chairman,

I would like to start by praising the able Swiss Chairmanship of the OSCE during this very testing year. I am also grateful for your kind hospitality and for the excellent organization of this Ministerial Council.

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

Mr. Chairman,

Your initiative to dedicate yesterday's discussion over dinner to the situation in and around Ukraine was a warranted one. It provided Participating States with the opportunity to debate an extremely worrisome situation and to highlight what we believe are the conditions for a lasting and peaceful solution.

A point that was repeatedly made, and one that Portugal fully supports, is the absolute need to respect Ukraine's unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity.

It is also paramount to preserve the agreed cease-fire. Unfortunately, developments on the ground threaten to reverse the progress achieved in Minsk. The resuming of hostilities, reports of movements of unidentified military personnel and materials and the hardening of attitudes from the parties in Ukraine are deeply worrying.

I call on all parties to undertake sincere efforts aimed at de-escalating tensions and to refrain from taking actions that may hinder the implementation of the Minsk Protocol.

Mr. Chairman,

The crisis in and around Ukraine and the illegal annexation of Crimea, which Portugal condemns, brought back tensions we thought outdated.

A lasting solution must be based in the principles that we pledged to respect as signatories of the Helsinki Final Act and of the Charter of Paris. They remain valid and are the bedrock of peace and security in the OSCE area. The main message emanating from today's Ministerial Council should precisely be the reaffirmation, by all Participating States, of their commitment to implement those principles in good faith.

The response by the OSCE to the crisis deserves to be commended. Portugal supports the tireless efforts of the Swiss Chairmanship. The OSCE proved to be of great value

in facilitating a genuine dialogue, in trying to build trust and confidence and in adopting initiatives with clear impact on the ground such as the Special Monitoring Mission.

ODIHR played a crucial role through its observation missions of presidential and parliamentary elections. Those elections were landmarks on the democratic consolidation process of Ukraine. It is deplorable, however, that the parliamentary elections could not be held in the whole Ukrainian territory.

Mr. Chairman,

As we approach the fortieth anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act, we must pursue all efforts aimed at materializing the vision of a comprehensive, cooperative and indivisible security community from Vancouver to Vladivostok and rooted in agreed principles, shared commitments and common goals. I highlight the importance of the Helsinki plus forty process in this regard. I also take good note of the initiative of establishing a Panel of Eminent Personalities on European Security as a Common Project.

To fulfil that vision each Participating State must, first and foremost, comply with its obligations and commitments. And we must all seize the potential and added value of the OSCE, the key forum for dialogue and European security, notably through a persistent and balanced engagement in the work of its three dimensions which are the pillars of the Organization.

I still expect an ambitious outcome of the Basel Council and I welcome the documents we will be agreeing to, particularly the declaration on foreign terrorist fighters. Addressing this phenomenon requires our joint efforts. In this regard, Portugal attaches great importance to the cooperation with the Mediterranean Partners and I highlight the declaration we will adopt on the issue.

Before concluding, I wish to congratulate Germany and Austria for the decisions entrusting them with the OSCE Chairmanships in 2016 and 2017, respectively. I conclude by conveying Portugal's best wishes of success to the incoming Chairmanship and by assuring Serbia that it can count on our full support.

I thank you.