

STATEMENT

by Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan

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at the plenary session of the OSCE Council of Foreign Ministers

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Introduction

- Let me join previous speakers in **thanking Germany** for hosting this important event, as well as for its effective stewardship of our Organisation.
- Rebuilding **confidence and trust** in Europe and Eurasia remains an urgent task. The German chairmanship was more than correct in highlighting this as the main challenge for the OSCE. We have fully supported respective efforts and will continue to do so during the Austrian chairmanship.
- Notwithstanding our joint efforts, we are still far from what was enshrined in the **Astana Declaration** six years ago and from what is outlined in the OSCE's founding documents. The **Eurasian dimension** of the OSCE security space is the core message of the Astana Declaration and should remain in our focus. In fact, Eurasia, despite the many challenges, numerous protracted conflicts and some hot ones, can perhaps be the area where, we, as a community, can pilot win-win scenarios, and doom zero-sum games to history.

Strengthening the OSCE

- **This year, we have witnessed new threats** fuelled by shifts in technology, the rise of radicalism and nationalism, pandemics, economic turbulence, the proliferation of nuclear materials, and an unprecedented increase in refugees – all of which necessitate new approaches.
- As an Organization, **we must evolve to face modern conflicts and confrontations, and to become an Organization prepared to meet the challenges of the 21st century, not of the last century.** In doing so must reinforce the multifaceted and enduring principles on which the Organization was founded.
- Recent crises have strained these principles. The **situation in Ukraine** shows how a national tragedy can have **global consequences**. It has undermined security and revealed stark differences in the way countries approach security policy.
- **We support efforts, promoted by the German chairmanship and others, to strengthen the cooperative security including by strengthening conventional arms control mechanisms and modernizing the Vienna Document.**
- Generally, Kazakhstan fully supports all calls to strengthen the OSCE, its legal status, and its institutions. We believe that the manner in which the **OSCE Program Office in Astana** is operating could serve as an example of the OSCE's **best practices**.
- The OSCE should continue to be a good partner for countries in transition. **The Organization should work with the governments of Participating States, not on them**, in terms of promoting the principles of good governance, including strengthening the rule of law, institution building and nurturing a new political culture. And this is a work of several generations.
- We continue to support strengthening the OSCE in all three dimensions. That is why we nominated **Mr. Adil Akhmetov as a candidate for the post of OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities**. We believe his broad experience as Personal Representative on Combating Intolerance and Discrimination against Muslims during

three chairmanships as well as strong background in science, legislative work and diplomacy uniquely qualify him for this post. Therefore, we ask for our colleagues' support for his candidacy.

Ukraine

- In addressing the conflict in Ukraine, the world's focus turned once again to the **OSCE's capacity**.
- The world was reminded of the important role the OSCE can play. We were able to deploy the **Special Monitoring Mission in Ukraine** and we continue to facilitate ongoing dialogue between Russian and Ukrainian politicians and officials despite other international organizations suspending their efforts.
- **There is no alternative to dialogue**. The OSCE is unique in its potential to facilitate negotiation and foster consensus. At the outset, it was unthinkable that the OSCE would play the mediator role between Russia and Ukraine. This shows how our principles have endured, even while our methods and position in the world have evolved.
- However, for this to continue in the future, **we need to continue re-adjusting our Organization to the current environment** through renewed commitments to building a secure world through cooperation.

Economic Connectivity and the Role for the OSCE

- More than 100 years ago, British historian Sir Halford Mackinder coined the now well-known phrase: "*He who controls the **Eurasian Heartland**, controls the World-Island.*" In our modern setting, I would suggest these words be re-phrased: "*He who trades across the Eurasian Heartland, brings great benefits to himself and the world.*"
- Our geography is now an advantage. Central Asia is no longer **land-locked, but land-linked**. It is a connecting bridge between continents, enabling us to both boost our own economies, whilst also creating opportunities further afield. And it should be the main approach to economic development in the region.
- In Kazakhstan, we see connectivity as one of the key tools of long-term development. We define connectivity as **Hard Connectivity** and **Soft Connectivity**. **Hard Connectivity** is related to physical integration of major infrastructure projects, such as transport and transit routes, while **Soft Connectivity** is about harmonizing our tariffs, norms, procedures and improvement of conditions in order to develop intraregional trade.
- Announced by President Nazarbayev in November 2014, the **Nurly Zhol** new economic policy largely corresponds with plans outlined in China's **One Belt, One Road** initiative. Launched into operation in recent years, sections of the international highway **Western China – Western Europe** international highway, as well as the **Kazakhstan-Turkmenistan-Iran-Persian Gulf railway**, can be an organic part of the modern Silk Road routes.
- We believe that the **OSCE should play a role in assisting us in realising these new opportunities**. When looking at Soft Connectivity, we need more active interaction at the regional level. Here **the OSCE could provide assistance** by sharing expertise, knowledge, analysis and new technologies.
- The **Eurasian space** is working towards the significant challenge of establishing **common economic area** based on the free circulation of goods, capital, services and labour. We see the EAEU **not as an inward-looking bloc** but one that actively seeks to foster cooperation with both groups of countries and individual states.
- It is why we believe there is major potential in developing **trade and economic cooperation between the EAU and the EU** – something which is especially important in light of difficulties experienced by the world economy.

- We would like to see initiatives to support the development of regional integration embedded into the OSCE's overarching strategy.

Realizing Growth Opportunities in the OSCE

- In Kazakhstan, we have focused on increasing the attractiveness of our country as a location for **inward investment**, including introducing a favourable tax and visa-regime for potential investors. We have offered an ambitious **comprehensive national privatization plan**, which with our continued economic reforms, has seen companies such as Uber, Starbucks, McDonalds, Netflix and many others enter Kazakhstan's market.
- We have responded to tough global economic conditions with the **Kazakhstan 2050 Strategy** as we work towards our aim of becoming one of the world's top **30 most developed** countries. We are putting in place **Five Institutional Reforms** which draw on world's best practices.
- OSCE should be looking outwards by building economic links. But we will only succeed if we act to integrate our economies. We hope **EXPO 2017 in Astana** with a focus on Future Energy will provide a venue for OSCE members to engage with each other – and with nations outside the region – to build bridges that create stronger economies and a safer world. Already, 112 countries have confirmed their participation as well as 17 international organizations.

Regional and Global Security

- **Terrorism** remains one of the gravest threats to international security. More action is needed to:
 - Curb the **recruitment of young people** by evil organisations like the so called ISIS who exploit technology to spread their radical ideology;
 - Cut off the **financing** of terrorist organisations;
 - Develop **regional strategies** to prevent terrorists crossing easily between countries.
- The **Afghan-led and Afghan-owned** national reconciliation process is an ongoing priority for the OSCE. At the same time, the political and military situation in Afghanistan **remains tense and is likely to deteriorate further**.
- Kazakhstan supports international efforts to stabilize Afghanistan. We supported the **Northern Distribution Network** and the **New Silk Road initiative**. Kazakhstan and Pakistan developed the Roadmap for Regional Confidence Building Measures in Disaster Management.
- The transit of drugs from Afghanistan remains one of the most pressing challenges for stability in Central Asia and the OSCE region. Up to **one third of drugs trafficked from Afghanistan passes through Central Asia**.
- **CARICC** plays a valuable role in uniting the efforts of regional players engaged in the fight against drug trafficking. It is an example of unity against common threats. We appreciate the OSCE's involvement in this process.
- The President of Kazakhstan advanced a number of forward-looking initiatives during the UN General Assembly in 2015 which are aimed at rebuilding trust in international relations.
- At the heart of these initiatives is a call to develop a **Global Strategic Initiative Plan** to ensure that in time for the UN's centenary in 2045, the world is rid of war, nuclear weapons, and other threats to humanity. We encourage the establishment of a stable and fair global system where all nations have equal access to world infrastructure, resources and markets.

- Kazakhstan **welcomes** the **results of the presidential election in Uzbekistan**. We respect the choice of the people of a brotherly nation and will steadfastly support efforts aimed at **strengthening the internal stability, further economic development and political evolution** of Uzbekistan. We think new opportunities are emerging for mutually beneficial cooperation between Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, and for the expansion of cooperation of all countries of Central Asia.
- As is well known, there are **many unresolved issues in the broad and complex area of transboundary water management** in Central Asia, which pile up year on year.
- Amongst the most important of these issues I would like to highlight the need to improve the regulatory framework in the water and energy sectors, to seek consensus or compromise on issues concerning the construction and safety of hydraulic facilities, to **ensure the equitable distribution of water between countries** and their compliance with obligations, the introduction of new water and energy saving technologies, and the search for a balance between irrigation and power generation needs.
- It is also necessary to enhance cooperation in the sphere of environmental protection and water management, including sustainable water use in the region, and **the “Green Bridge” international environment initiative** of Kazakhstan.
- We consider **the recent elections in the United States and Austria as well as referenda in Great Britain and Italy** as expressions of the popular will in those countries. It is a message to the political elites that peoples’ grievances and concerns should be taken into account in a more proactive way. We further think that the results of these votes as well as of future elections in France and Germany next year should be viewed as opening opportunities for dialog and understanding within and between countries. This is the view we have in Kazakhstan.

Kazakhstan at 25: Contributing to Global Good to Remain Top Priority

- Today’s meeting is held as Kazakhstan prepares to celebrate its **25th Anniversary of independence**. In this relatively short timeframe, Kazakhstan has significantly contributed to **global security** by renouncing the fourth largest nuclear arsenal in the world, as well as becoming a global **leader in disarmament** and in strengthening the nuclear **non-proliferation process**.
- Within this framework, Kazakhstan has been instrumental in achieving a number of important milestones, including initiating the adoption of the **UN Universal Declaration on the Achievement of a Nuclear-Weapon-Free World**.
- Kazakhstan’s contribution was recently recognized with our election as a non-permanent member of the **UN Security Council for 2017-2018**.
- In this capacity, we intend to contribute to strengthening stability and security in the Eurasian space, while focusing the international community’s attention on security and development challenges of **Central Asia and Afghanistan**.
- We will strive to make a substantial contribution to global peace, rule of international law, and the fight against terrorism. The foreign policy initiatives of President Nazarbayev, as outlined in the **Manifesto “The World. The 21st Century”**, will serve as an integral part of our agenda in the Security Council.