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**STATEMENT BY  
MS. MICHELINE CALMY-REY, PRESIDENT OF THE  
SWISS CONFEDERATION, AT THE EIGHTEENTH MEETING  
OF THE OSCE MINISTERIAL COUNCIL**

Vilnius, 6 December 2011

Mr. Chairperson,  
Excellencies,  
Colleagues,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

I should like first of all to congratulate the Lithuanian Chairmanship for the organization of this Ministerial Council meeting. The opportunity to conduct a high-level exchange on security and co-operation in Europe is a real asset for the OSCE and the subject remains highly relevant.

The work carried out during the year coming to a close by our delegations in Vienna has resulted in a large number of draft decisions. I sincerely hope that it will be possible to adopt a balanced set of decisions.

I should like in particular to applaud the updating of the Vienna Document on confidence- and security-building measures. At a time when other regions in the world are showing an interest in the security and co-operation model established by our Organization, it is high time for this document to be given a facelift. I truly hope that this will be just a first step towards a substantial modernization of the Vienna Document. Only in this way will it be able to continue to perform its role in full as the centrepiece in the guaranteeing of mutual confidence among participating States, which is one of the foundations of the security of all of us. Confidence does not exist undividedly within the OSCE, however, as evidenced by the difficulties we have experienced since 2002 in agreeing on a ministerial declaration. To achieve this we need a common denominator. The shared points of reference – from the Helsinki Final Act to the Astana Declaration and including the various principles we have adopted and commitments we have undertaken – must be adapted to present-day circumstances, and I regret that it is so difficult for us to reach agreement on this subject. The current negotiations on the decisions to be adopted tomorrow are an illustration of this. The OSCE's traditional vocation has been to establish bridges between profoundly and dangerously opposing camps. This co-operation beyond ideological differences remains one of the principal assets of this Organization, and a certain pragmatism is more than ever necessary today.

Switzerland has always considered the OSCE as the platform of choice for handling regional security issues. The role of our Organization in narrowing the east-west divide and stabilizing the conflicts born of the break-up of the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia is widely recognized. Swiss diplomacy has been involved in these efforts since the beginnings of the CSCE, including the drafting of the Helsinki Final Act in Geneva from 1973 to 1975. My country held the Chairmanship of the OSCE in 1996, which was a particularly difficult year.

One of the questions we have to decide on tomorrow is the Chairmanship of the OSCE in 2014. Together with Serbia, Switzerland has proposed that it hold the Chairmanship in 2014 followed by Serbia in 2015. Together, our two governments have elaborated the principles that will guide the co-operation between these two successive chairmanships.

On the basis of these principles we propose to develop a joint work plan for the years 2014 and 2015. We undertake to co-operate closely on all essential matters and to carefully co-ordinate all major decisions. The joint candidature for successive chairmanships by Switzerland and Serbia has widespread support from the participating States.

We welcome the constructive attitude of Serbia in the dialogue between Belgrade and Priština under the auspices of the European Union. We firmly believe that these positive developments will rapidly result in concrete progress in the field. We all know how complex and difficult it is to manage the situation on the ground, and under these circumstances the Serbian Government deserves our wholehearted support. We have the possibility today of expressing our confidence in it by entrusting it with the Chairmanship of this Organization. I am convinced that Serbia will prove itself worthy of this confidence and that our gesture will help to further stabilize the situation in the Western Balkans.

In our view, this innovative proposal has the advantage of creating a longer-term framework and of establishing continuity in the OSCE's endeavours to deal with the current challenges to European security. We are certain that the proposed formula will make a useful contribution to strengthening confidence among participating States, which is indispensable if we are to achieve real progress in the resolution of the tensions and conflict situations that unfortunately still exist on our continent.

Mr. Chairperson,

More than ever today, we are seeing that the notion of security is not limited merely to the military dimension. The current challenges call for considered and nuanced responses co-ordinated at the national and international levels. In this context the OSCE should serve as a platform for exchange and should foster this joint reflection, helping us in this way to progress together towards a more unified and safer Europe.

Thank you.