



REPUBLIC OF ALBANIA
MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Statement

by **H.E. Mr. Ditmir Bushati**

Minister of Foreign Affairs of Albania

as delivered at the 23rd Ministerial Meeting of the OSCE

Hamburg, 8 December 2016

Mr. Chairperson,

Mr. Secretary General,

Dear Colleagues,

I would like to thank Frank-Walter Steinmeier and the German OSCE Chairmanship for their hard work, benevolent dynamism & genuine dedication to collective security in Europe.

As our continent faces multiple and intertwined security challenges, the OSCE remains a unique forum for inclusive dialogue and indeed a true diplomatic battlefield of values. It is essential that we talk with one another in order to reduce uncertainty, reduce security grey zones and reduce prejudice which often accompanies paranoia.

The violation of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity represents the biggest challenge to European security. This is the third winter of the conflict; the reports from the ground are sobering as over 3.8 million people in Ukraine are in need of humanitarian assistance. We call on all parties to implement the Minsk Agreements in full. We all agree that the only solution to the crisis in and around Ukraine is political. Albania remains a strong supporter of the Special Monitoring Mission in Ukraine. The safety and security of our monitors is non-negotiable; impediments and obstructions are unacceptable; and those responsible for the attacks must be held to account.

We congratulate the German Chairmanship for placing dialogue at the center of its work, but equally so for strengthening people-to-people contacts and enabling genuine exchanges between civil society, youth and businesses in the OSCE area.

I subscribe to the view of the Chairmanship-in-Office that when differences are too big to overcome, it is important to be pragmatic and look for practical areas of cooperation. Very much like the Western Balkans connectivity agenda, which has proven to be a key factor in overcoming barriers and strengthening political confidence-building and security in the region. We have managed to make good progress in regional cooperation in the Western Balkans. There are six countries in the format, and we look forward to the day when Kosovo will be seating around this table as a participating State. But till that day comes, we strongly encourage the incoming Austrian Chairmanship-in-Office to explore ways of ensuring that this organization does not discuss about Kosovo, without Kosovo.

Dear Colleagues,

We are all in agreement on the unique role that the OSCE fills in the European security architecture. But for this Organization, its Secretariat, independent institutions and field missions to carry out their work as mandated by us, they need our support, political and budgetary.

The OSCE is what we as participating States make of it. Albania strongly believes that we need to strengthen it, very rationally, in the areas where the OSCE has a distinct added value, in a spirit of inclusiveness and complementarity.

Arms control, including disarmament and confidence - and security-building, is integral to the OSCE's comprehensive and cooperative concept of security. And it is regretful that efforts to modernize the Vienna Document were not successful. But risk reduction and enhanced military transparency are important for the safety and security of us all, and we believe that the structured dialogue proposed by our German colleague is an initiative worth supporting.

Mr. Chairperson,

I would like to thank again the German Chairmanship for its tremendous work during this past year. I wish every success to the incoming Austrian Chairmanship, and assure them of our full support in steering the OSCE in these challenging times.

Thank you.