

**Statement by  
Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Belarus  
Mr. Vladimir Makei  
at the OSCE Ministerial Council  
(Belgrade, December 3, 2015)**

Dear Mr. Chairman,

Dear Colleagues,

Our meeting is taking place at the time of **critical increase in challenges and threats**, testing the fundamentals of the OSCE.

Today a **qualitatively new situation** has taken shape in the security sphere. One cannot wall off or hide from modern threats any longer.

The **international terrorism has become harsh every-day reality**. Terrorists are challenging openly the very foundation of our societies and our values. The theater of war against terrorism is everywhere. No one is proof against this.

Dramatic events in North Africa and the Middle East has triggered massive waves of migration that have already swept over many participating States like tsunami. The current **migration crisis in Europe is fraught with serious risks** in all dimensions of security. Today we see the danger that Europe would fail to “digest” uncontrollable and unlimited migration from outside. In this respect, *Est modus in rebus*.

Despite the progress achieved in peaceful settlement, **the conflict in the East of Ukraine** continues to bleed.

Unfortunately, other protracted conflicts are still on the OSCE agenda.

We also witness **building up of armaments**, continuing erosion of military and political mechanisms, and as a result, increasing tension in the region.

We have never recovered from the “cold war” syndromes. And regretfully the OSCE has not abandoned the “bloc thinking”. **The rule of force, confrontation, sanctions mentality** still prevail in interstate relations.

The diplomacy recedes. The measure of success is the damage inflicted on the opponent, rather than the solution of a problem. The use of power-based methods in the vast majority of cases results in extreme aggravation of the situation.

This applies primarily to major powers. As for **small- and medium-sized states, they are forced to make a choice**: are you with us or with them? As a result, the confrontation escalates.

Mr. Chairman,

Under the circumstances, we do not have the right to stand idle. Our citizens expect from us rapid and decisive actions.

We strongly believe that the OSCE is the most appropriate regional format and an instrument capable to promote effective synergies of efforts of participating States with a view to addressing common threats and challenges.

Security, confidence and consolidation are, in our opinion, three key pillars, on which prospective cooperation within the OSCE should be built.

**Security.** In order to overcome the crisis of European security it is necessary to restore **the strategic consensus on common goals and principles of co-operation**. We need to focus on the most pressing and topical threats and challenges.

It is often the case within the OSCE that everything comes down to a dispute over the issues, which are sensitive for some states only. Even for this Ministerial meeting a bulk of documents a priori doomed to failure have been prepared. We had better focus only on a few ones, which are of truly fundamental importance for the whole continent.

What is most important for Europe now? These are **security and stability** in our view. It is only in secure and stable Europe that steady, sustainable development and progress in economic, ecological and humanitarian spheres could be achieved.

Belarus is ready to share its experience and enhance its contribution to the common efforts. Whether it be arms control, fight against terrorism, illegal migration or support of the peace process in Ukraine.

**Confidence.** The crisis of mutual confidence erodes the framework of cooperation in all three dimensions of security, and weakens the OSCE.

We should renounce attempts to use the Organization in order to drag through narrow national interests, to strengthen one's own security at the expense of partners, and to establish or to extend spheres of influence.

Only **mutually respectful dialogue** can serve as an imperative for overcoming the existing contradictions; however, it is almost inconceivable to engage in it when sanctions and restrictive measures are employed.

**Consolidation.** One of the lessons learned from the Helsinki process, the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of which we celebrated this year, is exactly that, despite differences in approaches, the political will and strong focus on dialogue allow us to reach compromises and to take decisions of common interest.

The OSCE can and should be the **platform for rapprochement and generating common approaches** in all dimensions of security – this is the natural purpose of our Organization.

However, it also can and should become a **catalyst for effective actions in order to respond** to security threats – and there is its future.

With this in mind, we need **to strengthen jointly our Organization, to raise its effectiveness** and to improve the toolkit at our disposal.

In conclusion, let me express words of gratitude to the Serbian Chairmanship-in-Office for the effective leadership of this Organization in 2015 and for the preparation of this meeting, as well as to wish Germany successful work as the OSCE Chairmanship in 2016.

Thank you for attention.