

STATEMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF POLAND
20th OSCE Ministerial Council
Kyiv, 5 December 2013

Mr. Chairman,

Let me start by expressing my sincere thanks to Ukraine for the outstanding hospitality extended to all of us here in Kyiv. I would also like to commend the Ukrainian Chairmanship for its true leadership and tireless efforts to promote dialogue and co-operation among the participating States. Thanks to the devotion and professional skills of the entire Chairmanship's team in the last twelve months we have been able to register progress on some of the topical issues the OSCE deals with. I hope that the outcome of this meeting will be the best testimony to their efforts.

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

While we, the politicians and diplomats, have been asking ourselves since many years the question of how relevant the OSCE is, Ukrainian people at Majdan answered our doubts over night. Dramatic events in Kyiv clearly show that norms, principles and commitments of the OSCE (from the Helsinki Decalogue and the Charter of Paris up to Dublin decisions) need to be constantly relearned, rediscovered and strictly upheld.

We look at these events with great concern, but also with hope that the political dialogue between the Government and the Opposition will allow for a compromise that will benefit Ukraine. Ukrainians deserve fundamental freedoms. They deserve uncompromised, well-functioning democracy. This is where the OSCE keeps coming into play – we will not move any further if we are not able to abide by commitments to our societies.

Mr. Chairman,

The importance of the Helsinki Process for peace and security in the OSCE area is undeniable. The activities of the CSCE and later the OSCE have contributed to a fundamental transformation of relations among the participating States. Moreover, the support provided by the OSCE Institutions and Field Operations proved to be pivotal for the stability and democratic transformation not only of individual countries, but entire regions.

While acknowledging achievements of the OSCE, we must frankly admit serious problems our Organization still needs to tackle. We have not been effective in resolution of conflicts in the Caucasus and Moldova, we have not been able to ensure full respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms in our region, and we have not designed truly effective mechanisms to address jointly transnational threats to security.

We cannot turn a blind eye to these problems. If not properly addressed, they will have far-reaching adverse effects for the whole OSCE area and the Organization itself. This is why we

all need to co-operate closely to find responses to old and emerging threats and challenges. The work must start with substantial improvement of the level of implementation of our joint commitments, including inter alia by re-establishing full co-operation with OSCE institutions and field presences. Unfortunately, there are very serious non-compliance problems in all three dimensions of security. This leads to grave deficit of trust among us. Combined with divergent security perceptions, it is one of the most serious challenges we have to deal with urgently.

We all seem to agree that decisive action is needed. But fresh ideas on what exactly needs to be done are rather scarce. No surprise. Restoration of trust is a long process, which requires full engagement of all participating States, readiness to consider the concerns of others and to make compromises. The sense of common direction and ownership of the OSCE are badly needed now.

I am not going to offer a magic solution. But I am deeply convinced that the best way to ensure progress in this respect is through the enhancement of political dialogue at various levels and in various formats. We should open up to new ideas and suggestions by those, who are not directly involved in the daily routine of the Organization.

First of all there is a need to establish a stronger link between discussions in Vienna and the security-related work in capitals. It would seem advisable to capitalise also on the experience and wisdom of some of the former politicians involved in shaping the security system in our region in the past. They may provide good advice on how to adjust the OSCE better to the old and new risks and challenges. Last but not least, common understanding seems to be developing about the need for establishing a closer co-operation with the civil society and academia on issues related to security.

First steps have already been taken. I am glad that the contribution made by such initiatives as IDEAS and EASI has received our wide recognition. I hope that soon experts and academics, particularly those who form the OSCE academic network, will become an integral part of our dialogue within the Organization. I am also very glad about the strengthening role of the "Security Days" under the aegis of the Secretary General. In my opinion suggestions coming from these different directions would create a critical mass and generate a new impulse for changing the way we are interacting on security matters.

Mr. Chairman,

Consolidating our security dialogue could create favourable conditions for the efforts to find a paradigm for Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian security in the XXI century. This work has already started in the framework of the "Helsinki + 40" process. I truly hope that 2015 will be an important milestone on the way to construct a security community based on active co-operation in all three dimensions.

In this respect I would like to commend the exemplary interaction of the two upcoming Chairmanships and their efforts to ensure a longer perspective in planning the Organization's activities, also within the "Helsinki + 40" process. I have no doubts that their joint Road Map

for the process will be of pivotal importance for further structuring of this fundamental debate.

Finally, thinking about the future of this Organization and in particular the “Helsinki + 40” process, one might consider a decision to hold a summit in 2015. The experience so far clearly indicates that whenever the participating States decided to have a meeting of heads of state or government the sense of collective responsibility for the Organization prevailed. I hope that this would be exactly the same now. The value of summits lies not only in adopted documents. Equally important is that such meetings create a positive dynamics for further progress within the European security dialogue. Regarding OSCE Summits exclusively as platforms for generating formal commitments would seriously narrow down their importance for the Organization. I hope we will start a discussion on this subject soon.

Thank you for your attention.