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**STATEMENT BY
MR. ANDREY KELIN, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE
RUSSIAN FEDERATION, AT THE 1061st MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

2 July 2015

**In response to the statement by the Minister for Foreign Affairs
of Germany, Mr. Frank-Walter Steinmeier**

Mr. Chairperson,
Minister,

We are pleased to welcome you to the Permanent Council meeting and thank you for your presentation of the priorities of the incoming German OSCE Chairmanship for 2016. We agree with many of them.

We agree that facilitating the settlement of the conflict within Ukraine will remain one of the OSCE's main tasks, supported by the activities of the Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine (SMM) and the Trilateral Contact Group and with the support for this process in the Normandy format.

This is certainly the most serious challenge currently facing the OSCE and European security as a whole. Nevertheless, it would be a mistake to attribute all the problems that have arisen in the European security area to the Ukrainian crisis. It did not occur in a vacuum, much less was it caused by Russia's actions. The crisis was the consequence of acute problems that accumulated and remained unresolved for decades which were primarily due to the unwillingness of a number of Western States to engage in equal and mutually respectful co-operation based on the principles of indivisible security. The fundamental principles of the Helsinki Final Act have been violated, above all Principle VI on non-intervention in internal affairs. While there was talk of commitment to the concept of a Common European House, the actual approach was to erect new dividing lines, both military and economic. The events in Ukraine were the logical result of those trends.

We value Germany's role in facilitating the implementation of the Minsk agreements, including through the Normandy format. We call on the upcoming Chairmanship to exert its significant influence on Kyiv so that the agreements can be implemented in good faith and not replaced by unilateral steps. Achieving a lasting ceasefire and the withdrawal of weapons under the supervision of the OSCE must be accompanied by simultaneous and equally

strenuous efforts for the implementation in good faith of the political provisions of the Package of Measures for the Implementation of the Minsk Agreements.

We believe that progress in resolving the crisis in Ukraine should be the catalyst for a thorough discussion of the construction of a European security system that would make a repetition of what happened in Ukraine impossible. We agree that such a system should continue to be based on the Helsinki principles, which have stood the test of time. However, they must be fully and comprehensively applied.

In view of the OSCE's geographical representativeness and its comprehensive mandate, it could be the central platform for these discussions. In this context, we look forward to the continuation of the dialogue within the Helsinki+40 process next year.

One of the highest priorities of this dialogue, apart from renewing reliable arms control and confidence-building mechanisms, should be to find a way of aligning and harmonizing the integration processes in various parts of our continent. Decisions are required on the organizational and legal strengthening of the OSCE and its potential in crisis warning and response. The experience gained by the SMM and the OSCE through its participation in the Minsk peace process should be used.

The key to the OSCE's success lies in balancing its activities geographically and thematically and in taking the interests of all participating States equally into account.

In the politico-military dimension, there is a need for overall agreement regarding the common goals in the area of arms control and confidence-building measures, which would also enable us to work on adapting the relevant mechanisms and documents. In the absence of a common vision of this kind, the mechanical development of commitments will not solve the problem.

Recent events in Europe and the Mediterranean have shown the importance of a greater focus on transnational challenges, including threats from the Islamic State. Calmly sitting it out in isolated islands of security – whether this be NATO or the European Union – will not work. For this reason, the topics of combating terrorism, radicalization and extremism and illicit drug trafficking should remain on the OSCE's agenda. The developments at the annual counter-terrorism and anti-drug conferences should be used to prepare documents on these subjects for the Ministerial Council meeting. We agree with Germany's intention to focus more on the challenges emanating from the southern Mediterranean.

In the economic and environmental dimension, it would be advisable to concentrate on developing specific recommendations in areas such as combating corruption and illegal migration and improving the investment climate. At first glance, the idea of increasing the connectivity of participating States in the economic sphere seems interesting. We look forward to specific details of this.

It is indisputable that dialogue on the third basket requires rethinking. We emphasize that it is inadmissible to use humanitarian issues as an instrument of political pressure. The intergovernmental nature of the Organization should not be eroded by attempts to transform it into a disorganized civil society forum.

We fully support the German Chairmanship's priority of protecting the rights of national minorities. The normalization of their situation in the countries where they feel disempowered is a major security factor. There should be an increased focus on combating all manifestations of religious intolerance, including discrimination against Christians. This also applies to combating trafficking in human beings, protecting the rights of children, reducing statelessness, ensuring privacy, social and economic rights and the freedom of movement, and developing common rules for election observation.

The OSCE's work on facilitating conflict resolution should be conducted on a status-neutral basis in strict accordance with the principles of consensus, taking into account the positions of all conflicting parties and in the agreed negotiation formats. We are confident that the German Chairmanship will actively support a peaceful settlement in Transdniestria, the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh problem, as well as doing all it can to advance the Geneva International Discussions on stability and security in the Trans-Caucasus. The resolution of the remaining disagreements in the Balkans and the prevention of the emergence of new hotbeds of instability in the Balkan countries deserve just as much attention. We share our German colleagues' desire to continue joint efforts to further improve the OSCE's early warning and conflict prevention and resolution toolkit.

As experience has shown, the success of the Chairmanship-in-Office lies in its ability to develop honest and mutually respectful dialogue and to remain neutral in order to achieve consensus.

I should like to wish our German colleagues success and to assure them of our support for those endeavours that are aimed at strengthening a unifying agenda for the OSCE.

Thank you for your attention.