

**CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY**  
**Address by Mr. Sean Sherlock T.D.,**  
**Minister for Trade and Development of Ireland**  
**OSCE Ministerial Council, Basel 4-5 December 2014**

Mr. Chairman, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Ireland fully associates itself with the remarks delivered earlier by High Representative Federica Mogherini on behalf of the European Union.

I should first like to thank the Government of Switzerland and the city of Basel for the efficient organisation of this Ministerial Council and for the warm hospitality shown to delegates.

Clearly we meet at a time of extraordinary challenges for European security and this Council is unlike any other in the recent history of the OSCE. We are not here to do business as usual.

The continuing crisis in Ukraine will be the focus of most discussion over the two days of the Council and rightly so. The crisis is one of the most serious we have faced in many years. Ending the conflict in a peaceful manner that safeguards Ukraine's sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity is an absolute priority for the international community.

I would like to take the opportunity to express Ireland's deep gratitude and appreciation for the vital work that the OSCE is carrying out in Ukraine. The Special Monitoring Mission played a key role in helping to secure agreement in September in Minsk on a ceasefire and peace plan. The brave men and women of the Mission travel throughout the conflict zones under difficult and often dangerous conditions. Without their tireless efforts it is hard to envisage how the Minsk ceasefire agreement could otherwise have been achieved. A lasting ceasefire remains key to the success of current efforts to reach a sustainable political solution, based on respect for Ukraine's sovereignty and with clear guarantees on border security, disarmament of all illegal groups and the withdrawal of foreign forces.

I am pleased that I was able to pledge a further contribution of €200,000 for the work of the Special Monitoring Mission in Ukraine, when I met the Secretary General earlier today. This brings the total Irish voluntary contribution to €300,000 and is a concrete indication of the importance Ireland attaches to this vital work.

Not business as usual, does not mean, of course, that there is no business to be done here. The recent visit to the Permanent Council of UN Secretary-General Ban Ki Moon reminded us that a regional multilateral organisation like the OSCE should remain in touch with the broader international agenda. In 2015 this will include the negotiation of the sustainable development goals.

In relation to good governance and in other respects, the OSCE's comprehensive approach to security and the SDGs have much in common.

We should be constantly aware of the possibilities which exist for cooperation with other organisations such as the EU, Council of Europe and other regional bodies which are represented here today.

Even as we meet in this Ministerial Council, work is continuing to finalise agreement on a number of Decisions in all three dimensions and on cross-dimensional issues. A balanced outcome to the Council requires that attention should be paid to all Dimensions.

The eventual Decisions should also take account of the varying interests and priorities of all participating States.

Over the past year there has been intense consultation on the Helsinki +40 process, which was the subject of a Declaration at the last Ministerial Council in Kyiv. It is important that work continue on this process which should renew our Organisation and ensure its continued relevance to the world. I am confident that this work will be taken forward by the incoming Serbian, German and Austrian Chairs.

I welcomed the opportunity to participate in the discussion on 'European Security as a Common Project' during the luncheon earlier today and I commend the work done by the Chairman in Office to develop thinking on this subject.

The Panel of Eminent Persons is an interesting initiative, which may well bring needed objectivity to addressing the problems we face.

It is also notable that even in this time of crisis the work of the OSCE's autonomous institutions continues.

The work of ODIHR, the High Commissioner on National Minorities and the Representative on Freedom of the Media deserves our commendation. ODIHR maintains its position as the global leader in election monitoring and the development and sharing of best practise.

We can be justly proud of the support and advice which the OSCE Field Presences offer to participating States, sometimes in difficult circumstances.

Ireland strongly supports the wish of Mongolia, our newest participating State, to have a field presence established on its territory.

Our partnerships with the Asian and the Mediterranean regions are a very important means of extending awareness of the OSCE and its ideals. Ireland is supportive of the idea of extending partner status to other States which seek it and sees such status as a useful complement to other relationships with States.

Mr. Chairman,

I should like to pay particular tribute to the personal efforts of the Chairperson in Office and his teams in Vienna and Bern, so ably led by Ambassadors Greminger and Grau.

Few countries could have offered the standard of impartial and constructive leadership displayed by Switzerland during this difficult year.

Finally, I should like to renew the commitment of Ireland to the OSCE. It has played and will continue to play a major role in the security of Europe and it is our intention to offer all possible support to that role.

Thank you.