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**STATEMENT BY MR. ALEXEY MESHKOV,
DEPUTY MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE
RUSSIAN FEDERATION, AT THE OPENING SESSION OF THE
2014 ANNUAL SECURITY REVIEW CONFERENCE**

Vienna, 24 June 2014

Mr. President,
Mr. Chairperson,
Ladies and gentleman,

I am grateful for the opportunity to address the opening session of the OSCE Annual Security Review Conference (ASRC), which is a key event in the first “basket”. Russia has consistently advocated the strengthening of this forum and constantly pays close attention to the discussions within it.

Needless to say, it is impossible for today’s Conference not to mention something as important as the crisis in Ukraine, the consequences of which are already having an extensive impact on the development of multilateral dialogue on security issues in the Euro-Atlantic region. Furthermore, the crisis threatens to undermine the framework of mutual commitments elaborated within the OSCE, including those that are an integral part of the system of international law.

Today’s Conference is therefore of particular importance. It offers us a unique chance to engage in substantive and active dialogue on a wide range of security problems. It would be unforgivable to miss this opportunity.

Distinguished colleagues,

The current crisis in Europe is a direct consequence of the policy pursued in recent decades by some of our Western partners. The Russian Federation has repeatedly warned that attempts to build the entire European security system according to a personal template without taking account of the pressing concerns of partners are doomed to failure. Virtually nothing has been done to put the principle of the indivisibility of security and respect for the sovereign interests of other States into practice. Key agreements and lofty declarations to that end are yet to be implemented.

There are many examples, ranging from the aggression in Yugoslavia and the deployment of elements of the United States global anti-missile defence system in Europe to the preservation of obsolete mechanisms for conventional arms control in Europe. Today, a

policy of creating regions of so-called “controlled chaos” is being systematically pursued. One such region is Ukraine, where there has been direct interference in the internal political processes of an independent State. An anti-constitutional revolution with the backing of extremely nationalistic forces has received unconditional support. A profound crisis has been provoked at the heart of Europe. A civil war has essentially begun in the country. The crimes committed against civilians – whether in Odessa or Luhansk, Sloviansk or Mariupol – still need to be investigated.

Using the crisis in Ukraine as a pretext, attempts are being made to completely reshape the existing European security system. NATO forces are assembling on Russia’s borders. The numbers involved in previously notified exercises is increasing. United States strategic B-2 bombers are conducting military exercises near the Kaliningrad region. Nuclear-capable aircraft have been transferred to Ämari airfield in Estonia. The time needed for them to reach major Russian cities is being reduced to a minimum. NATO ships equipped with long-range missiles patrol the Black Sea on an almost regular basis. The fleet of NATO reconnaissance vessels in the Black Sea is growing.

Anti-Russian hysteria has been unleashed, and is at times simply excessive, especially with regard to the situation in Ukraine. It should also be noted that the moralizing tone is heard first and foremost from representatives of States that not so long ago bombed Iraq and Libya, which today are once again barely surviving as independent States. Russia, on the other hand, is merely guilty of having warned about the erroneous nature of such a policy and of daring to express its point of view, pursue an independent foreign policy, defend its national interests and protect the rights of the Russian-speaking population. Contrary to logic and common sense, attempts to “contain” and “isolate” Russia have intensified – an absurd goal, given the level of interdependence nowadays. It is not only absurd, but also at odds with the fundamental interests of European security.

Projects involving co-operation to counter terrorism and drug trafficking and programmes to assist Afghanistan are being curtailed for political reasons. Problems also arise with respect to the monitoring of military activity. What is the point of observation missions if their results are disregarded and replaced by political propaganda, or, even worse, used for reconnaissance purposes prior to military operations? This kind of approach poses a dilemma: either we believe that the system established over a period of decades is completely unworkable and requires radical revision, or we need to act responsibly, recognize inspection results and discuss the proposals for improvement in the relevant forums.

Unfortunately, even the preparations for the ASRC have shown that not all of our partners are giving consideration to pressing European security interests.

This kind of approach is completely unacceptable to Russia. In the current circumstances, we need to take a number of urgent and long-term measures. These urgent measures involve facilitating a ceasefire and the start of inclusive national dialogue in Ukraine, the ultimate goal of which would be to reliably safeguard the fundamental rights of all Ukrainian citizens. The main responsibility here lies with the elected President and other authorities in Kyiv. The fact that the President of Ukraine has announced a truce is an important element in a definitive settlement. As the President of the Russian Federation, Mr. Vladimir Putin, declared, Russia will of course support these intentions. Let me repeat: it is important for this truce to give rise to dialogue between all the opposing parties so that the

people living in south-eastern Ukraine feel themselves to be part of that country and for their rights to be fully guaranteed by the basic law, in other words the Constitution.

In short, a Ukrainian settlement is possible only through peaceful dialogue and consideration of the interests of the eastern regions of the country.

There is a particular need for the OSCE's potential at this crucial time. We should like to mention the serious efforts already made by the Organization and its Swiss Chairmanship to assist the Ukrainian people in resolving this internal crisis. The deployment of the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine was important in demonstrating the international community's support for the Ukrainian people. I should like to take this opportunity to thank all the Mission staff, who have been obliged to work under the extremely difficult conditions of an internal armed conflict.

We consider the road map drawn up by the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office, the President of Switzerland Mr. Didier Burkhalter, as a follow-up to the Geneva statement of 17 April to be another important achievement of our Organization. This document has lost none of its relevance today.

Initial contacts have been made with Viktor Medvedchuk, leader of the grass-roots movement Ukraine's Choice, in Donetsk and Luhansk. They resulted in the agreement to a meeting with the OSCE Mission to establish dialogue between Kyiv and south-eastern Ukraine, which Russia supports at the ambassadorial level. Contact in this form was established yesterday.

These are the first encouraging signals. For them to be transformed into real results, the parties to the conflict, as has already been stated, must cease all hostilities and sit down at the negotiating table.

Lastly, we should also develop long-term measures to prevent the existing European security system from being dismantled. We firmly believe that only by putting the principle of the indivisibility of security into practice will it be possible for us to reverse the destructive trends.

In the current context, our well-known proposal to draw up a Treaty on European Security enshrining in a legally binding form the political commitments on equal and indivisible security developed within the OSCE is acquiring new relevance. It would be in the interests of all the States in the Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian region to draw up such a Treaty as quickly as possible.

Essentially, the conclusion of a Treaty of this type would provide a "foundation" for the "security community" encompassing a common economic, humanitarian and politico-military space from the Atlantic to Vladivostok. The development of synergies between international organizations and integration communities should be an integral part of this.

Despite the policy of curtailing co-operation on certain issues of mutual interest, Russia intends to continue its systematic policy of seeking unifying topics. We shall continue to adhere strictly to our OSCE commitments and systematically strive for equal security conditions for all the countries of our continent regardless of whether they belong to

politico-military structures or not. This should be the goal of the Helsinki+40 process, which must be continued.

We are looking forward to substantive and lively discussions during the four working sessions on transnational threats and challenges, conflict resolution, arms control and assistance to Afghanistan. In our view, the themes of the sessions we have mentioned are precisely those areas where it is really important to focus the consolidated efforts of the OSCE participating States and Partners for Co-operation. Our concrete steps will ultimately make it possible to protect our citizens and create favourable conditions for the development of our States.

Distinguished colleagues,

Over the next three days of work at this Conference we have a unique opportunity to either salvage the considerable know-how amassed within the OSCE or “bury” it indefinitely. I hope that the scale will tip in favour of finding ways of moving towards a truly pan-European security system and that this will be reflected in the conclusions and recommendations of our Conference.

I should like to wish all the participants in this forum interesting and fruitful work.

Thank you for your attention.