

**Statement by
the Minister of Foreign Affairs
of the Republic of Belarus
Mr. Vladimir Makei
at the OSCE Ministerial Council
(Hamburg, December 8, 2016)**

Dear Mr. Chairman,
Dear Colleagues,

The necessity to strengthen security and step up co-operation is being referred to today much and often. However, to our regret, the scarcity of both is very much in evidence in the OSCE area.

The attempts to establish interaction even there, where states are confronted with common challenges, increasingly fail to yield results. The success is being measured again by the degree of damage inflicted on the opponent. The architecture of European security which was built up with such a difficulty is degrading.

What does Belarus suggest under the circumstances?

First.

More than 40 years ago the Helsinki process was required to defuse tension between the West and the East. In the course of that process the principles of peaceful co-operation of states in bipolar world were worked out. The current situation, unfortunately, resembles very much the «pre-Helsinki» period. The estrangement between the West and Russia is increasing. The prospects of a new cold war are becoming more clear and sharp.

Being aware of that, the President of Belarus has come up with an idea of a **new peacemaking process by analogy with the Helsinki process**. A meeting of the **leaders of Russia, the United States, EU and China** with a view to honestly exchange opinions on the root causes of the crisis in international relations has become imminent. It is essential to give rise to comprehension of the new rules of evolving multipolarity with unconditional respect of interests of one another; **to engage the international expert community**, if necessary. Belarus is ready to organize and host relevant meetings in Minsk.

Second.

Twenty years ago by voluntarily giving up on its nuclear weapons Belarus made a solid contribution to strengthening security in the region and proved in substance its commitment to promoting its national interests by exclusively peaceful means. Our approaches in this sphere remain unaltered.

In this context we consider the Foreign Minister F.-W.Steinmeier's **initiative on relaunching the conventional arms control** well-timed. The dialogue on this issue should be opened as soon as possible without any preconditions and should have an inclusive character.

As a Chair of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) in 2017 Belarus **stands ready to facilitate the organization of the discussion at the CSTO site** of this and other initiatives aimed at easing tensions and strengthening security in the European and Eurasian regions.

Third.

Against the backdrop of confidence crisis and increase of confrontation, regional conflicts pose even greater threat. The key purpose of the OSCE is to resolve and prevent such conflicts.

Our Organization proved its relevance by its engagement in conflict resolution in Ukraine. Belarus strongly supports the activity of the Trilateral Contact Group on Ukraine and the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission in Ukraine. We stand ready to do our best in future so that peace and calm will have restored in fraternal Ukraine.

Fourth.

We welcome the discussion initiated by the German CiO within the OSCE second dimension on the issue of connectivity.

In the framework of Belarus' Chairmanship of the Central European Initiative (CEI) in 2017 we intend to **focus on connectivity topic** as well. Taking into account the intention of the Austrian CiO to keep this topic on the OSCE agenda, we count on active interaction between the CEI and the OSCE in this and other areas.

Fifth.

The existence of a robust parliamentary component in the OSCE is a serious advantage of this Organization. Interparliamentary contacts are exactly those "breeding ground" which often give rise to important constructive decisions allowing bridging interstate differences and overcoming contradictions.

Exactly with this constructive and productive discussion in mind that the **Belarusian party is getting prepared to the next year's summer session of the OSCE PA in Minsk.**

Dear Colleagues,

The German saying goes: «*Der erste Schritt ist immer der schwerste*». Hopefully, today's Ministerial meeting could become the one very difficult but necessary step on the way leading us to the desired goal – easing of tensions in the OSCE area.

In conclusion let me express words of gratitude to the German Chairmanship-in-Office for its input in the work of this Organization in 2016 and for the preparation of this meeting, as well as to wish Austria successful OSCE Chairmanship in 2017.

Thank you for your attention.