

**STATEMENT BY MINISTER FOR EUROPEAN AFFAIRS OF IRELAND DARA
MURPHY T.D., OSCE MINISTERIAL COUNCIL, HAMBURG, 8 DECEMBER
2016**

Mr. Chairman, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Ireland associates itself with the remarks delivered earlier by High Representative Mogherini on behalf of the European Union. We congratulate Germany on a committed and creative Chairmanship in 2016. We thank Hamburg for the warm hospitality.

The poet John Donne wrote that “no man is an island, entire of itself, every man is a piece of the continent”. I would add that no State is an island in the modern world, even island States themselves. We all live in an interdependent world. We can choose to work together, towards common peace and security, or against each other, to our mutual disbenefit. This interconnectedness is something that we understand very well in the OSCE. However, we have not yet fully achieved the European and international cooperation that was dreamt of after the two World Wars.

The three key organisations at the heart of European peace and security, the European Union, the Council of Europe and the OSCE, have all experienced difficulties in the recent past. They will, of course, weather these difficulties. However, there is no doubt that this is a time in which each is facing questioning and challenge.

**OSCE Ministerial Council
Hamburg, 8-9 December 2016**

At a time of questioning, it is essential that we recognize the core truth that the unprecedented period of peace and prosperity in Europe has been built on a foundation of cooperation and respect for the fundamental principles of human rights and international law. The Helsinki Final Act and the Charter of Paris were built on this core truth, and we must keep it constantly in mind.

We need also to renew and strengthen our commitment to multilateral diplomacy. Ireland co-facilitated the recent agreements in the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and migration. Here in the OSCE region we can draw on these agreements.

The only path to successful multilateralism is dialogue and a commitment to exclusively peaceful methods. This entails patient, step-by-step attempts to define the bigger picture and understand and accommodate others. The challenge in the OSCE is to make our dialogue real.

The annexation of Crimea and the failure to fully implement the Minsk Agreements in Ukraine were and are a breach of the international order, and a choice of brute force over dialogue. They are, in short, an unwelcome and dangerous precedent. It is essential that Russia fully lives up to its commitments under the Minsk Agreements and facilitates the return of peace to Eastern Ukraine.

**OSCE Ministerial Council
Hamburg, 8-9 December 2016**

Ireland fully supports the work of the Special Monitoring Mission in Ukraine. I wish to express Ireland's deep gratitude to the brave men and women of the SMM. Their safety is a prime concern.

The OSCE must address the challenges it faces with renewed vigour. It can, by definition, only do so with the full support of all participating States. We should aim over the coming months and years to restore the spirit of Helsinki and Paris. A step by step approach is required.

As a matter of urgency we should end the gridlock in OSCE appointments. The OSCE institutions – the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, the High Commissioner on National Minorities, the Representative on Freedom of the Media and indeed the OSCE itself – cannot be effective when their leadership is uncertain.

We should reengage across the entire range of first dimension issues, be it the Code of Conduct or the fight against terrorism. The German Chair-in-Office's efforts to reopen dialogue in the field of arms control are welcome. We also need to make a determined effort to resolve the protracted conflicts. Until they are resolved, these conflicts risk reigniting at any time.

In the economic and environmental dimension we need to engage in a practical manner with the sources of mass migration and conflict, and ensure that the OSCE plays its part in tackling climate change.

**OSCE Ministerial Council
Hamburg, 8-9 December 2016**

And in the Human Dimension we need to reaffirm our commitment to universal human rights. States and societies that suppress human rights are building problems for the future. Freedom of assembly and expression, in particular, are essential to the creation of modern, progressive and peaceful societies.

A decade from now we should be able to say, referring to the Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian region, that 'the whole is greater than the sum of the parts.' To do so, we need to recommit to the building of States and international relations firmly based on human rights, and to a spirit of constructive dialogue firmly rooted in the principles of international law.