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**STATEMENT BY THE HEAD OF THE DELEGATION OF  
THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION AT THE CLOSING SESSION OF THE  
TWENTY-FIRST MEETING OF THE  
OSCE MINISTERIAL COUNCIL**

Basel, 5 December 2014

Mr. Chairperson,

We express our appreciation to the Chairmanship for the excellent organization of the Ministerial Council meeting and for the hospitality. Switzerland has proved its commitment to the role of an honest broker and has done everything possible to maintain dialogue in the OSCE at a time of crisis.

However, the full range of positions on the issues discussed was not duly reflected in the summary by the Chairperson-in-Office of the results of the first day of the meeting. It is important to respect the expression of will of the Crimean people who succeeded in exercising their right to self-determination, as enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and the Helsinki Decalogue.

The events in Ukraine are the result of a systemic crisis in the OSCE region that has been brewing for a long time. Its roots lie in the incapacity to ensure true unity in the Euro-Atlantic area based on recognition of the equal rights of all participating States, respect for the legitimate interests of each of them and non-intervention in internal affairs.

Construction of a “European House” of this type has been consistently undermined by unilateral actions: the expansion of NATO, the establishment of United States anti-missile defence facilities in Europe, the aggressive promotion of the concept of Eastern Partnership and the erection of artificial barriers to relationships between people. These are all links in the same chain.

Nevertheless, our discussions in Basel were not reduced to disagreements. An important outcome was the adoption of a joint declaration in which we affirmed the enduring importance of the victory over Nazism, honoured the memory of the victims of the Second World War and condemned attempts to deny the Holocaust.

A decision has been adopted on further steps in the Helsinki+40 process. We welcome the Chairmanship’s initiative to establish a Panel of Eminent Persons. This should help us to find a way together out of the deepening European security crisis.

We were also able to adopt other important decisions reflecting the OSCE's comprehensive agenda – above all on combating terrorism, preventing corruption, reducing the risk of disasters and developing co-operation and dialogue with partner countries, including on countering manifestations of intolerance towards Christians and other religious communities.

The signing of amendments to the Florence Agreement marked the conclusion of international monitoring under one of the most important articles of the Dayton Peace Agreement, which remains the basis of the settlement for Bosnia and Herzegovina, and is an important step in transferring responsibility to the Balkan people themselves. This confirmed that the closure of the Office of the High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina is long overdue.

Despite the attempts of certain countries to place the emphasis on confrontation and labelling, during the discussions in Basel we heard much calm and collected support for constructive ideas on ways to overcome the present crisis. We believe that the very fact that there is broad discussion on European security issues within the 57-State format is worth a great deal.

Next year, the Chairmanship baton will pass to Serbia. We wish our Serbian colleagues every success in this difficult undertaking. We trust that under the Serbian Chairmanship a balanced policy will be continued in full measure on establishing the prerequisites in the OSCE for constructive work to find answers in the area of European security.

Thank you for your attention.

I request that this statement be appended to the journal of the Ministerial Council meeting in Basel.