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Speech by Premier Ministre François Fillon OSCE

Summit, Astana (Kazakhstan)

Wednesday, 1 December

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Mr President, Mr Secretary-General,

Heads of State and Government,

Ministers,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Meeting here today in Astana, it is our wish solemnly to recall that the principles proclaimed by the Helsinki Charter 35 years ago are still relevant today despite all the upheavals that have occurred on our continent.

The strength of the OSCE is to accommodate under a single umbrella 56 nations linked by common values, 56 nations whose intention is to resolve by mutual consultation the conflicts from which Europe has so often suffered in the past.

More than ten years after the Istanbul Summit, I wish to thank President Nazarbayev for having taken the initiative of organising this Summit, and for having thus made it possible to give practical expression to the proposal made two years ago by the President of the Republic, Nicolas Sarkozy.

That proposal was motivated by the shock of the conflict in Georgia and its repercussions for our common security space.

But it was also based on an observation of fact limited neither to the European region nor to the theme of security: the observation that we cannot face up together to the realities of the 21st century using tools from the 20th century.

Since the last OSCE summit in 1999, new threats have appeared:

- The emergence of international terrorist networks in an arc of crisis stretching from Afghanistan to the regions of the Sahel;
- The development of criminal organisations with international ramifications;
- The proliferation crisis in Iran, which has become a serious abscess for our security;
- The existence of systemic risks such as those linked to the volatility of commodity prices and the financialisation of our economies.

However, alongside those risks there are positive developments such as the remarkable economic rise of the emerging countries, enabling whole continents to leave poverty behind. That meteoric rise is good news for the world, but it can generate tension.

If we are to face up together to these challenges, if multipolarity is to be a factor for peace, we must channel it within a new multilateralism supported by reform of international institutions. That is the logic underlying our creation of new and more effective institutions with our partners in the European Union.

That is also the logic underlying the recent implementation by the Member States of NATO of a new strategic concept and their decision in mutual agreement with Russia to take their partnership a further stage forward.

And finally, it is in that same spirit that we wish to conduct our Presidency of the G8 and the G20: in the face of the systemic problems revealed by the economic and financial crisis of 2008, there can be no return to business as usual nor any return with resignation to the previously prevailing order.

Today, within the framework of the OSCE, we must be ambitious enough to launch a new partnership.

Our goal, supported jointly with Germany, must be to turn over a new page and leave behind the rivalries of the past; it must be to lay the foundations of a community of security in the Euro-Atlantic and Euro-Asian spheres:

- A community founded on the existing commitments and principles of the Helsinki Final Act and the Paris Charter;
- A community based on respect for territorial integrity, underpinned by a reliable arms control regime and the ruling out of the use of force in the resolution of disputes;
- A community that acknowledges the freedom of States to choose their allies, just as it acknowledges the indivisible nature of security in our common space;
- And, lastly, a community that remembers that if we are to guarantee long-term security we need a holistic approach taking into account not only the military issues but also economic and environmental questions, respect of human rights and the progress of democracy.

If we are to travel down that road, we must provide improved guarantees of security within our common space.

And to achieve that, we must first take the settlement of frozen conflicts forward resolutely.

Regarding Transnistria, negotiations must enter into a more active phase and they must be accompanied by confidence-building measures aimed at a settlement of the conflict that preserves the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Moldavia. The European Union will continue to support the OSCE in this endeavour.

Where Georgia is concerned, we wish to see its independence, its sovereignty and its territorial integrity respected within internationally recognised borders.

We call on the parties to implement fully and entirely the Agreements of 12 August and 8 September 2008; we support the Geneva Discussions and we consider it imperative that the international organisations should be present once again on the ground.

We salute the solemn undertaking given by the President of Georgia before the European Parliament to refrain from the use of force and we call on all the parties to accept this open hand.

And lastly, as Co-Chair of the Minsk Group, France is determined to assist in the settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, to which there can only be a balanced and negotiated political solution, on the basis, among other elements, of the proposals jointly articulated by presidents Sarkozy, Medvedev and Obama in L'Aquila and Muskoka. These proposals are to be considered as an integrated whole.

The OSCE is an expression of our common destiny, but it must be able to act with greater speed.

As the crisis in Kyrgyzstan demonstrated, we must equip our organisation with the means for greater reactivity and effectiveness.

With regard to arms control, we are on the point of taking a first step by modernising our transparency and confidence-building measures.

We must also arrive at an agreement on the launch of new negotiations on the future of the Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE) regime.

We must make the new threats an integral part of our cooperative programmes. Whether the issue is organised crime or terrorist proselytizing, these scourges concern us all and they call for a concerted response.

And to conclude, we must support more effectively everywhere the stability and reinforcement of democratic institutions. They are essential components of lasting security for all.

That is, in France's view, the programme that must be undertaken by the OSCE from this Summit on.

That is the roadmap that demands in-depth revision of our tools and our practices.

It is a roadmap that is part of a broader vision. A vision marked by the renovation of international organisations, marked by the development of partnerships across our continent at every level: the common economic and human space shared by the European Union and Russia, relations between the European Union and its continental partners in the Eastern Partnership, cooperation between the European Union and its neighbours in the South through the Union for the Mediterranean.

Mr President,

Let me express the wish that this Summit in Astana should mark a crucial political stage in the strengthening of our collective security instruments. We must confirm here and now the OSCE's relevance and prepare for its adaptation to a fast-changing world.

It is our responsibility, here and now, to make progress on security in Europe and the security of Europe.