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**JOINT STATEMENT BY
THE MINISTERS FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF ARMENIA, BELARUS,
KAZAKHSTAN, KYRGYZSTAN, THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION AND
TAJIKISTAN AT THE TWENTY-THIRD MEETING OF THE
OSCE MINISTERIAL COUNCIL**

Hamburg, 8 and 9 December 2016

**Improving the OSCE's effectiveness in the
system of pan-European security**

The Member States of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) are deeply concerned at the ongoing crisis in the system of pan-European security, exacerbated by the threats of international terrorism and organized crime, the current migration crisis and the danger of the escalation of tension and conflicts in the world and the OSCE area.

A way out of the crisis in the system of pan-European security and responses to the common challenges can only be found together. This confirms the relevance of the objective of building an equal and indivisible security community, as set at the 2010 Astana Summit of the OSCE.

The OSCE platform can and should be used effectively for equal and mutually respectful political dialogue between States in order to overcome differences, rebuild trust and develop co-operation and joint efforts to combat common threats and challenges. For this to happen, there is a need to strengthen the inter-State character of the OSCE, its decision-making bodies and the consensus rule as the bases of the Organization's work.

The OSCE could become a platform for dialogue between integration communities active in the European, Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian regions and for the future realization of the idea of "integration of integrations". The 1999 Platform for Co-operative Security sets out the possibilities for this.

The fundamental tasks facing the OSCE as a whole include the further development of multilateral collaboration with account taken of the interests of all participating States and promoting greater confidence and regional economic co-operation, in particular through the abandonment by OSCE participating States of the logic of dividing lines and closed borders, the application of unilateral economic sanctions, economic blockades and exclusion from regional economic projects, and visa and other restrictive measures.

The OSCE has taken on a large body of political commitments, which are a component of modern international relations. All OSCE countries, whether acting

independently or as members of integration communities, should adhere to all principles of the Charter of the United Nations, the Helsinki Final Act and the Charter for European Security, the norms of international law and the OSCE's commitments.

The OSCE has sufficient potential and means for countering the escalation of tension and for effectively contributing to the settlement of conflicts. Such settlement should be exclusively by peaceful means within the existing formats and with the participation and full respect for the interests of the parties to the conflicts.

In order to improve the OSCE's effectiveness in the system of pan-European security, work should be continued on the comprehensive reform of this Organization, with a balance between its three dimensions, namely the politico-military, economic and environmental, and humanitarian dimensions. A proper legal basis for its work needs to be established through the adoption of a legally binding OSCE Charter. The CSTO Member States presented a draft document to this effect in 2007.

Work should continue on refining the OSCE institutions – the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), High Commissioner on National Minorities and Representative on Freedom of the Media. They should abide by their mandates and by the principles of impartiality, transparency and accountability to the decision-making bodies. Questions relating to the functioning and format of OSCE field missions should be resolved exclusively on request of the host country and on the basis of national requirements and priorities, and the mandates of the missions should be agreed with their authorities in accordance with the Charter for European Security.

We are deeply concerned by the situation that arose at the 2016 Human Dimension Implementation Meeting in Warsaw, which the official delegations of Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan were forced to walk out of because a number of people convicted of criminal offences in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan had attended and been allowed to speak at the event. We regard such incidents as being unacceptable.

In that connection, consideration should be given to initiatives by a number of CSTO Member States on the elaboration of rules governing the work of the OSCE executive bodies, the improvement of their programme and budgetary activities, including extrabudgetary projects, the principles underlying ODIHR election monitoring, reform of the human dimension and the procedure for the participation of non-governmental organizations in OSCE events.

The CSTO Member States are in favour of developing co-operation with the OSCE on questions of mutual interest with a view to overcoming the security crisis, building trust in the pan-European space and collaborating to confront common threats and challenges to security and stability.