



MC.GAL/8/13
5 December 2013

ENGLISH only

**Statement by H.E. Mr. Leonid Kozhara,
Chairperson-in-Office, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ukraine
at the opening ceremony of 20th Meeting of the
OSCE Ministerial Council
(Kyiv, 5 December 2013)**

**Mr. Prime-Minister of Ukraine,
Dear Ministers,
Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen,**

It is my great pleasure as a Chairperson-in-Office to welcome you all in Kyiv for the **Twentieth Meeting of the OSCE Ministerial Council**.

As you have probably noticed, our premises are located close to the **Dnipro** River. It has played a crucial role in the life of our people since ancient times. It was the Dnipro River that offered its waters for ships under different flags, sailing “**from the Varangians to the Greeks**” on the famous trade route which flourished ten centuries ago.

As the ability to build bridges and operate ferries across large rivers was existential for the nations' survival in the ancient times, so dedication to **building bridges** remains an imperative for any country chairing the OSCE, including Ukraine.

Eleven months ago I took the office with a firm determination to promote **common vision, common goals and common actions**, to bridge divergences and to strengthen trust and confidence, so that we all could further move towards a shared vision of a **Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian security community**.

Today I would like to share with you some of my reflections of Ukraine's experience at the helm of the OSCE.

In 2013 we have succeeded in a number of **common actions**, each being a step towards making the OSCE area **more united and secure** as well as increasing the **relevance** of our Organization.

Your active **engagement** in the **Helsinki+40 process**, launched this year, allowed to accumulate already at this stage a number of interesting **ideas** on how to chart the Organization's future activities.

The Chairmanship, in particular, encouraged the participating States to reflect on strengthening the OSCE **effectiveness and efficiency**. It appears to be a complex and cross-cutting challenge for the Organization.

We had substantial discussions on improving the **working methods** of the OSCE bodies, in particular of the Ministerial Councils, bringing to them more interaction and “**dialogue spirit**”.

The **second year** of the process will play a key role in defining **ways to translate** those ideas into **reality**. I believe that efforts to implement the **Helsinki +40 Roadmap**, prepared by three consecutive Chairmanships of Ukraine, Switzerland and Serbia will be instrumental in this regard. Ministers **Burkhalter, Mrkic** and **myself** intend to present this document today.

For its part, the **Declaration on Furthering the Helsinki +40 Process** will allow us to **register** the progress achieved and to demonstrate the **strong engagement** of capitals to the process.

It is an **encouraging sign** for the OSCE that we are starting the Ministerial Council meeting with a number of **agreements already reached**. We should continue to depart from viewing Ministerial Councils as the only **catalyst** for generating necessary political will to come to agreement.

Dear colleagues,

This year we have strengthened the OSCE contribution to global efforts on combating **transnational threats** by agreeing on an initial set of confidence building measures in the area of **cyber/ICT security**.

We succeeded in finalizing our work on updating 1994 **OSCE Principles Governing Non-Proliferation**. I strongly welcome this **important step** in my both capacities, as the OSCE Chair-in-Office and the Foreign Minister of Ukraine, which two decades ago made its conscious and historic choice to renounce the nuclear weapons.

We have progressed in our discussion on strengthening the OSCE response to the plague of **human trafficking** in the OSCE region. By adopting the **Addendum to OSCE Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings** we will enhance the effectiveness of the anti-trafficking endeavours in the OSCE area.

Nowadays the **energy security** issues cut across the global security dialogue. The best way to address the **challenges** in this area is to improve technology and increase environmental friendliness of the energy-related activities. I am pleased that deliberations on the matter within the **Second Dimension** have demonstrated the readiness to elaborate a **common vision** on how the OSCE should act, by adopting **relevant Council decisions**.

We have worked tirelessly this year to take forward the OSCE *acquis* in the **Human Dimension**. Despite the existing divergences, we were able to agree on a **balanced** and **relevant** programme of the Third Dimension activities.

By preparing a **balanced set** of draft decisions in the Third Dimension, the Chairmanship has encouraged the participating States to demonstrate a **constructive approach** and to reaffirm our **commitment** to the promotion of human rights, democracy and the rule of law.

We believe the Kyiv Ministerial Council offers us an excellent opportunity for reaffirming and updating our commitments in the Human Dimension.

Distinguished participants,

We also remained committed to further strengthening political dialogue and practical co-operation of the OSCE with our **Partners for Co-operation** across all three dimensions.

Taking keen interest in the developments in the **Southern Mediterranean**, the OSCE has made its multi-dimensional toolkit available to its Mediterranean Partners. Extension of this toolkit to **Libya**, which applied to become a Partner for Co-operation, would enhance the security and stability in the region.

We all recognize the need to strengthen our engagement with **Afghanistan**, especially in the light of significant transitions underway in this country and ISAF withdrawal in 2014. I strongly welcome the recent **decision** on deployment of **ODIHR election support team** to Afghanistan.

The **Declaration** we have tabled for this meeting, will further contribute to **collective international efforts** aimed at long-term security and stability in Afghanistan.

A number of presidential and parliamentary elections took place in the OSCE in 2013. It was of an utmost importance that **ODIHR** and the **OSCE Parliamentary Assembly** renewed their co-operation in the area of election observation.

I would also like to mention the timely extension of the mandate of the **OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media**, as well as the appointment of a new **High Commissioner on National Minorities**. I encourage all participating States to act in the same constructive spirit in the year to come, while appointing a **new Director of ODIHR**.

Excellencies!

Ladies and Gentlemen!

Among the **threats** that remain in the focus of the OSCE for many years, **protracted conflicts** take a particular place. We've put the issue of their settlement **high** on our Chairmanship's agenda.

Since the beginning of the year I visited **all participating States** affected by the protracted conflicts, encouraging the sides to further work on finding **sustainable** and **long-term political solutions**.

We tried to fill the existing negotiation formats with **a more constructive spirit**. Despite a **challenging atmosphere** it was possible to reach compromise solutions on a number of topical issues within the "**5+2**" **talks on the Transdnestrian settlement** with **5 rounds** held this year. Two meetings of the Prime Minister of Moldova and the Transdnestrian leader, to which the Chairmanship invested a lot of facilitating efforts, also conduced to reaching compromise.

Co-chairing the **Geneva International Discussion** and supporting the efforts of the **Minsk Group Co-Chairs** were also among our key tasks throughout the year. I highly welcome the November meeting of the Presidents of Azerbaijan and Armenia, organized for the first time since January 2012.

Conventional arms control is another challenging issue, necessitating fresh solutions. Therefore we have initiated discussions on the role **conventional arms control and CSBMs** could play in the current European security architecture. I believe the **Forum for Security Cooperation** is well placed to continue the focused discussion on conventional arms control in **2014**.

Distinguished Participants!

The Chairmanship has laid a necessary groundwork for a **constructive ministerial dialogue** here in Kyiv. We have prepared a balanced framework for decisions, focusing on **pertinent issues** and **reflecting priorities** of different participating States.

Therefore I would like to encourage you to work together constructively to finalize a meaningful set of decisions that will be beneficial for the entire OSCE area.

Thank you!