

STATEMENT
by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan
H.E. Erlan A. Idrissov
at the plenary session of the OSCE Council of Foreign Ministers
(December 3, 2015, Belgrade)

Dear Madam Chair,

Dear friends, Ladies and Gentlemen,

- First of all, I would like to join our voice to all those expressing condolences to the United States over the tragic shooting in California yesterday and to say that our thoughts are with the families of the victims.
- Forty years ago in Helsinki, world leaders came together to sign the Helsinki Final Act. The document revolutionized the concept of comprehensive security, centering it on the principle of “cooperation over conflict.” It was upheld with a set of confidence building measures. This “Helsinki Spirit” was the driving force of multiple achievements by the OSCE during the Cold War era and afterwards.
- The Organization generated instruments and gained experience in overcoming crises and “stand-offs” from Vancouver to Vladivostok. Those instruments were reaffirmed in the Astana Declaration five years ago during Kazakhstan’s OSCE Chairmanship. Kazakhstan’s Chairmanship aspired to open a new chapter in the OSCE history – namely a chapter of equal partners, all equally responsible for the future of Euro-Atlantic and Euro-Asia security, stability and prosperity. In the Astana Declaration OSCE leaders committed themselves to a “vision of a free, democratic, common and indivisible Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian security community stretching from Vancouver to Vladivostok, rooted in agreed principles, shared commitments and common goals.”
- The Astana Declaration aspired to reset the Helsinki Spirit; it had prepared the OSCE to act in unison. But nobody worked on transitioning the document from a set of principles into a set of actions. We may have succeeded in translating “good thoughts” into “good words,” but we failed in translating “good words” into “good deeds.”

- This inability to move boldly and take courageous decisions that are free from prejudice, misperception and distrust has pushed the geopolitical stand-off from the Euro-Atlantic across to Eurasia. The eruption of the Ukrainian crisis, the Middle East conundrum and its ripple effect have shaken the very foundation of trust in the OSCE. This proved the deficiency of its CBMs and dormancy of its “safety valves.” It would seem we have all forgotten the principles of “trust,” “traditions,” “transparency,” and “tolerance”, which made up the “Four Ts” motto of Kazakhstan’s OSCE Chairmanship.
- The Astana Declaration is more relevant now than ever and has the potential to re-energize our Organization.

The immediate tasks as we see them are:

- First, the OSCE should prevent the freezing of conflict in Ukraine by providing an unbiased and inclusive platform to resolve it. With this philosophy in mind our President initiated the first meeting between the leaders of Russia and Ukraine, which took place in Minsk in August 2014. This turned out to be a foundation for the meeting of the “Normandy Four” and its further evolution into the Minsk agreements as we know them today.
- Second, and, perhaps, most urgently now, the OSCE could and should play a role in finding the way forward to reconcile relations between the two key OSCE participating states, Russia and Turkey, following Turkey’s downing of the Russian military plane near the Syrian-Turkish border. As President Nursultan Nazarbayev noted in his state-of-the-nation address only a few days ago, we in Kazakhstan were deeply saddened by this tragic incident and are deeply concerned by the deteriorating relations between Russia and Turkey. We must not allow these worsened relations to put at risk the first feeble signs of mutual understanding and genuine cooperation on the Syrian crisis and in the fight against Daish and other terrorists which we saw in Vienna last month.
- Third, the OSCE should prevent the expansion of Daish phenomenon spreading from the Middle East towards the whole of Eurasia. Kazakhstan proposed its vision at the September 2015 UNGA meeting when President Nazarbayev unveiled the idea of establishing an “integrated global network to fight international terrorism and extremism under UN aegis.” The legal framework for this idea might be provided in a comprehensive document (on countering terrorism) adopted by all UN member-states. But the frameworks of the document could and should be discussed and nurtured on the OSCE platform. Therefore, we encourage our colleagues to study this idea and support it.

- Fourth, the OSCE should discuss ways to prevent new threats and trans-border challenges that undermine the inner security of the OSCE space. We should find the way to unite our efforts in fighting illegal drugs, human trafficking, as well as threats emerging from new technologies. There is no greater challenge these days than that of uncontrolled mass migration to Europe from Syria and other conflict-ridden countries. Yet, again, we believe the OSCE could and should be used and seen as an important additional vehicle to address these challenges together.
- Fifth, the OSCE should continue to train specialists in all its OSCE participating states on peacekeeping efforts. Kazakhstan is learning a lot from its participation in the OSCE monitoring mission in Ukraine and carefully endorses further OSCE activity in this direction.
- Sixth, the OSCE should work on its image. Many people in the OSCE area have doubts about the Organization's activity. They do not see tangible results of its in-country field activities. Therefore, we propose that the OSCE should adapt and focus its activities on true individual needs and priorities of the receiving states. I am pleased to say that this format of the OSCE field mission's activity in Kazakhstan proved its effectiveness. The OSCE Program Office in Kazakhstan has focused on specific activities, has increased collaboration with the Government and other actors through better and open coordination the Foreign Ministry. And it works. We believe that this might be considered as a good model for OSCE field activity.
- Seventh, in times of global crisis the OSCE should strengthen its economic dimension in order to prove the Organization's relevance. We propose that the OSCE considers supporting Kazakhstan's initiative to establish in Astana an International Center of Green Technologies on the grounds of EXPO 2017 when it is finished. This Center has the potential to become a transfer of the OSCE know-how in "Economic and Environmental Dimension." Strengthening economy-to-economy and business-to-business interdependence in the age of global economic downturn will work better than any new "safety valve" created by the OSCE.
- Eighth, we hope the OSCE will seriously and more precisely consider the Eurasian dimension of its mandate. Our President has the vision for a Greater Eurasia which brings together the Eurasian Economic Union, the Silk Road Economic Belt, the New Silk Road vision, and the EU Strategy for Central Asia together for the benefit of all countries and its people within the region and beyond.

All the great powers in Euro-Asia have prioritized their interests differently by allocating them across security, economy and democracy components. We believe that they can all complement each other if there is a will to decrease the level of geopolitical stand-off.

It will help unlock the Eurasian security puzzle and set new rules. Astana wants to make sure that the “Great Game” mentality and practice are firmly replaced by the “Great Gain” policy approach. This is the core of our “Win-Win” philosophy.

“Win-Win” is possible only if all the parties involved develop geopolitical trust; overcome mentality differences, ethnic and cultural tensions; mutually recognize the legitimacy of security, political and economic interests of all sides;

We offer to launch this “Trust Building Exercise” and test its evolution in Kazakhstan, the heart of Eurasia.

Central Asia is land-locked and significantly impacted by the global economic crisis. The region is in need of hard (infrastructure) and soft (people-to-people, business-to-business) connectivity. We hope that the push from within the region (at grass-roots level, with business and transport interdependence) will move the process of regional interaction from the ground up.

The OSCE is a unique organization in the world that has such experience – of working on the ground to move such processes forward. Therefore, we want this idea to be embraced by the OSCE and become an operational task of the Organization with its own budget and human resources.

Central Asia is at the crossroads of its development - it faces a critical moment of generational change that should be used by all stakeholders for their own and most importantly shared interests. The best way to do it is through genuine and trustworthy dialogue.

- The mission of the OSCE in our part of the world could be to overcome history and push forward a new vision of peaceful Win-Win coexistence. To empower our newly emerged nations through a set of practical steps, including the unlocking of this land-locked region; encouragement of a steady flow of investment (to diversify local economies, develop local markets and regional trade), and nurturing a viable middle class as well as strong political engagement and support.
- I hope the OSCE lives up to this mission and through this exercise revamps and renews itself to meet the many more new challenges it faces today.
- Concluding, I would like that, regrettably, consensus could not be built around the issue of modalities for participation of some regional organizations in our

meeting, including the Collective Security Treaty Organization, the Eurasian Economic Union, the Turkic Parliamentary Assembly and the Cooperation Council of the Turkic-Speaking States (CCTS).

- However, I would like to thank the Serbian Chairmanship for inviting the CCTS to this meeting. As CCTS chair, we believe that this will help to attain shared goals by the two organizations.
- Finally, I would like to commend the Serbian Chairmanship and Secretary General Zannier and incoming chair Germany for their efforts to breathe new life into our organization and for their warm hospitality.