



Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

Secretary General Lamberto Zannier

Report to the Ministerial Council

Basel, 4 December 2014

Mr. Chairperson,

As you warmly welcome all of us here in Basel today, I would like to thank you personally and your dedicated teams in Vienna and Bern, led by Ambassadors Greminger and Grau, for your leadership, hard work and excellent co-operation with the OSCE executive structures throughout the year.

Ministers,

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We are all aware that this year has not been “business as usual” for the OSCE. The crisis in and around Ukraine has not only revealed a deepening East-West divide, but also called into question fundamental principles of security. Instability and insecurity are growing in the OSCE region and beyond.

The crisis in Ukraine caught the world by surprise. Yet as it escalated, the OSCE responded quickly and effectively. Our inclusive platform for dialogue and our flexible toolbox enabled us to take rapid action.

Every major OSCE structure is engaged in Ukraine – the Institutions, including the Parliamentary Assembly, the Secretariat, and the Office of the Project Co-ordinator in Kiev. And we have acted in close co-ordination with many partners, beginning with the UN, in line with Chapter VIII of the UN Charter, whose operationalization was at the centre of our Security Days discussions this year.

But the most visible sign of OSCE engagement is the Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine. Within 24 hours of the March 21 Decision authorizing the mission, we had first responders on the ground. Today, 341 monitors are deployed in 10 locations across Ukraine, including Donetsk and Luhansk, to monitor, facilitate de-escalation and report. By January, the SMM should reach its full strength of 500 monitors, with 350 deployed in the East.

In September, the Minsk Agreements tasked the SMM with monitoring the ceasefire and Ukraine's border with Russia. So now we have civilians running what is essentially a peacekeeping operation, but without military support. Our monitors' security is our top concern, but it also constrains their ability to carry out their mandate. We should applaud their courage and commitment, but we also need your firm political support to create the space for SMM to operate effectively and safely. Eight monitors were held captive by separatists for a month last spring. More recently, SMM armoured cars have repeatedly come under fire. These actions against our mandate and our monitors – your monitors – must be firmly condemned.

The crisis in and around Ukraine has also affected the broader OSCE agenda, especially the protracted conflicts in Moldova and the southern Caucasus, which continue to require OSCE engagement. At the same time, we must not overlook other security challenges in our region. We must enhance our efforts to combat transnational threats, in particular those related to terrorism. We should also further strengthen our relationship with OSCE Partners for Co-operation.

Dear Ministers,

As the OSCE has shown that it can deliver, it needs your political vision to guide it, and sufficient resources to achieve its full potential.

Our response to the Ukraine crisis is negatively affecting the OSCE's ability to carry out its other mandates. Regardless of the current SMM budget, resources are being diverted from other core activities, including flagship projects like the Border Management Staff College in Dushanbe, which may be forced to suspend activities in January if no additional funds are forthcoming. Compared to 2013, this year we are 9 million euros short on extra-budgetary funding overall, which is affecting important work in all three dimensions carried out by our Field Operations, the Secretariat and Institutions across the OSCE region. Meanwhile, despite growing challenges that the OSCE is being called on to address, the Unified Budget continues to decrease in real terms.

We will continue to face challenges in 2015 – the 40th anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act – and I look forward to working with the incoming Serbian Chairmanship to address them. Allow me to assure all of you of the continued commitment of our staff, as well as my own personal commitment, to assisting the participating States in implementing your decisions, and supporting your efforts to restore peace and stability in our region.

Thank you.