

**Special Meeting of the OSCE Permanent Council
Statement by the Delegation of Australia to the OSCE**

14 January 2016

Vielen Dank, Herr Vorsitzender Steinmeier, für ihre Eröffnungsrede.

Before I begin, I would like to offer sympathy and condolences for the families and friends of the victims of the terrorist attack in Istanbul on Tuesday and for my colleagues from Turkey.

Mr Chair, I welcome you on assuming the Chairmanship of the OSCE in 2016. You have plainly stated your commitments to strengthening the OSCE instrument for crisis and conflict management in the OSCE area.

Australia strongly supports the role of the OSCE operations in and around in Ukraine, in particular those of the Special Monitoring Mission; your emphasis on not just managing, but resolving the conflict in Ukraine is welcome. This conflict, now going into its third year, has had consequences that reached beyond the OSCE area. It has fundamentally undermined the principle of respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity; it has claimed the lives of many innocent people, including those 298 on board flight MH17.

The Australian Government has strongly condemned Tuesday's terrorist attack in Istanbul, and today's attacks in Jakarta. The drumbeat of these appalling acts reminds us that the surge of violent extremism will continue to be a significant security challenge in 2016, to all OSCE States and beyond. Australia will continue to work together with the international community to tackle terrorist threats at all levels. We welcome the OSCE's counter terrorism initiatives that range from de-escalation of conflicts, to efforts to prevent spreading of violent ideologies, through active inter-faith dialogues and sharing of information on CVE policies.

Advancing the security of women and girls, particularly during times of conflict, is a priority Australia shares with the OSCE. So we applaud your plans to

give boost to the OSCE Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality, with a focus on women's participation in conflict prevention, crisis management and post-conflict rehabilitation.

Before I conclude, Mr Chairman, I would like to draw the Permanent Council's attention to North Korea's nuclear test, in support of the distinguished Representative of the Republic of Korea.

North Korea's ongoing development of nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles, and its proliferation of sensitive technologies threaten the peace and security of the Asia-Pacific region and beyond. Australia condemns in the strongest possible terms the provocative and dangerous actions of the North Korean regime. Australia will continue to work with our friends and partners to support the security of the Republic of Korea, of other regional states, and the stability of our wider region.

We wish you, and all Participating States and Secretariat of the OSCE well, and look forward to continuing our cooperation with the OSCE, in the year 2016.