



**Closing Statement by**  
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**21st OSCE Ministerial Council**

**Basel, 5 December 2014**

Excellencies,  
Dear friends and colleagues,  
Ladies and gentlemen

This OSCE Ministerial Council was a special one. With 53 Ministers and around 1,300 delegates we have had a record participation. More important than the statistics is the fact that we had two days full of dialogue, of sometimes heated debates, but always with a view to finding common ground.

This is what the OSCE is all about: a meeting place for dialogue, even – and especially – when there are issues on which we disagree.

The Ukraine crisis was obviously at the heart of our deliberations. As I mentioned yesterday, there remain major differences concerning the analysis of this crisis. At the same time, yesterday's Chairmanship Summary showed that participating States do agree on important aspects of this crisis. We *do* have common interests. Among other things, there was very strong support for a continuous and broad engagement of the OSCE in the Ukraine crisis. I was also pleased to note that our discussions were frank but constructive, very much in the spirit of the OSCE.

In my opening address to this Ministerial Council, I urged participating States to continue to work towards effective multilateral solutions to the many common security challenges they face. In other words: even if this year's Ministerial Council has not been business as usual, we should also do some good business as usual.

In this regard, I am pleased that we were able to find consensus on a number of decisions and declarations in all three dimensions of the OSCE.

Regarding the first dimension, we have a Ministerial Statement on the negotiations on the Transdniestrian Settlement Process in the '5+2' format.

We agreed on two Declarations on the fight against terrorism; one concerning Kidnapping for Ransom and another one on Foreign Terrorist Fighters. This demonstrates that the 57 OSCE participating States condemn terrorism in all its forms, no matter where it is committed and who commits it.

There is also the Declaration on the Transfer of Ownership of Dayton Article IV 1B to the governments of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Croatia, and Montenegro.

Furthermore, we adopted a Decision on Small Arms and Light Weapons and Stockpiles of Conventional Ammunition as well as a Commemorative Declaration on the Occasion of the Twentieth Anniversary of the OSCE Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security.

In the second dimension on economic and environmental cooperation, we agreed on two Decisions, on Enhancing Disaster Risk Reduction and on the Prevention of Corruption respectively.

In the third dimension – the human dimension – we reached consensus on a Declaration on enhancing efforts to combat anti-Semitism that is building on the outcomes of this year's Berlin Conference.

However, no consensus was found on the proposed Decision on the Prevention of Torture, which is a priority issue of Swiss Chairmanship. Improved implementation of existing commitments in the human dimension must remain a priority for the OSCE.

Regarding, cross-dimensional issues, there is a Decision on Violence against Women and a Decision tasking us to elaborate an addendum to the Gender Action Plan.

I am also pleased to note that a Declaration on Youth has been passed, tasking the OSCE to deal with youth issues. The Model OSCE Youth Action Plan negotiated by our Youth Ambassadors was distributed to all delegations and will, I trust, inspire the OSCE to work out its own Youth Action Plan.

Moreover, we have two Declarations on Co-operation with our Mediterranean and our Asian Partners, respectively.

Ahead of the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act, I consider it important that we agreed on a Declaration regarding the next steps in the Helsinki+40 process.

We also agreed on a Commemorative Declaration on the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the end of the Second World War.

I welcome our decisions on the future Chairmanships. With Germany and Austria following the Serbian Chairmanship in 2016 and 2017, the future of this organisation is in good hands. This multi-year perspective allows us to address the big challenges for European security in a continuous and co-ordinated way.

The Chairmanship welcomes the fact that a civil society conference has taken place in parallel to this Ministerial Council, and just next door. On

Wednesday, I received the Basel Declaration and a comprehensive and inspiring set of recommendations put forward by civil society representatives. These recommendations have been distributed to all delegations and provide substantial input for our discussions. I am particularly pleased that the incoming Serbian Chairmanship will continue the dialogue with civil society.

Ladies and gentlemen

This has been an intensive year. Around 100 statements as Chairperson-in-Office, 66 of which were on the Ukraine crisis alone, illustrate how rapidly events have unfolded.

The Swiss Chairmanship has been a major team effort. I wish to thank my Special Representatives Angelo Gnaedinger on the South Caucasus, Andrej Kasprzyk on the conflict dealt with by the Minsk Group, Radojko Bogojević on the '5+2 Process', Gérard Stoudmann on the Western Balkans, and Tim Guldemann, Wolfgang Ischinger, and Heidi Tagliavini on Ukraine, for their committed work to reduce tensions and build confidence.

My Personal Representatives on Tolerance and Non-Discrimination – Alexei Avtonomov, Rabbi Andrew Baker, and Talip Kükükcan – had a very active year with country visits to the United States, Denmark, Russia and Turkey. I also thank my Special Representatives June Zeitlin on Gender and Madina Jarbussynova on Trafficking for their great efforts. And I thank Major General Michele Torres for the dedicated work done on the transfer of ownership of the sub-regional arms control agreement Dayton Art IV, Annex 1-B. My thanks go also to Ambassador John Bernard, Special Advisor of the Chairperson-in-office on the Legal Framework, Lieutenant Colonel (ret.) Helmut Napiontek, CE Representative to the Russian - Latvian Joint Commission on Military Pensioners, and to Colonel Markus Widmer, Head of the OSCE High-Level Planning Group.

We also wish to acknowledge the work of the eight coordinators of the Helsinki+40 Working Groups.

I am particularly obliged to my dedicated teams within the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, the Task Force OSCE Chairmanship headed by Heidi Grau and our Mission in Vienna headed by Thomas Greminger.

I wish to thank Secretary General Lamberto Zannier and the very dedicated OSCE staff in Vienna and in the 18 field missions. I am also grateful for the excellent cooperation with the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, the High Commissioner on National

Minorities, the Representative on Freedom of the Media, and the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly.

I wish my successor as Chairperson-in-Office, Ivica Dačić of Serbia, every success. Ivica, you can rely on my full support and that of Switzerland as we continue our engagement within the OSCE Chairmanship as an active Troika Partner.

Finally, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Basel and its authorities and population, which hosted us in this beautiful city. Thank you very much.

Ladies and gentlemen,

It was a privilege for Switzerland to chair the OSCE. We have been an active participant in the OSCE since the beginning, and we will continue to support it as much as we can in the years ahead.

We will remain fully committed to the efforts to resolve the Ukraine crisis. We also remain fully committed to strengthening the OSCE's capacity to act. We will seek to promote the discussion on how to reconsolidate European security as a common project, especially by means of the Panel of Eminent Persons that many of you have welcomed over the last days. We will also continue our deliberations on the link between trade issues and security and possible roles for the OSCE in this field, and I invite you to join in and share your own ideas.

As outgoing Chair and Troika member, Switzerland will chair the Asian Partners for Co-operation group. We look forward to this new role, which will also give us the opportunity to promote the notion of cooperative security with countries in East Asia and hopefully build up close partnerships to this end.