

## 19<sup>th</sup> Ministerial Council Meeting

### Plenary Statement by Parliamentary Secretary Robert Dechert Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Canada

#### On the occasion of the Ministerial Council meeting of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE)

(Dublin – 6 December 2012)

Mr. Chairperson, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I join others in thanking our Irish hosts for their warm welcome, and my colleague the Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs & Trade, Eamon Gilmore, for his effective leadership of the OSCE in 2012, as Chairman-in-Office.

Canada is extremely pleased that **Mongolia** has become the 57<sup>th</sup> participating State of the OSCE. From the outset, Canada has supported Mongolia's entry into the OSCE family as Mongolia shares our commitment to the promotion of human rights, democracy and rule of law.

Canada's values-based foreign policy is firm in the conviction that we must promote and protect the human rights and fundamental liberties of people whenever and wherever they are challenged or threatened.

We remain committed to the values and principles for which the OSCE stands, and its regional role in conflict prevention, crisis management and democracy-building.

Canada also places emphasis on accountable and effective management of the OSCE. This is all the more vital in these challenging economic times when Canada and other governments face fiscal restraint and need to see value for money for their financial contributions.

Canada's top priority for the Dublin Ministerial and for the work of the OSCE is **the Human Dimension of our security agenda**.

Enhancing human dignity in all corners of the OSCE region, regardless of race, belief, gender or sexual orientation, should remain our goal. Canada will speak up to ensure that the rights and fundamental freedoms of all are recognized and promoted. The OSCE's vital work must continue on the full range of tolerance and non-discrimination challenges that are, unfortunately on the rise in our region, and likely fuelled by the deteriorating economic situation in many OSCE participating States.

Canada remains deeply concerned about the incidents of anti-Semitism, Islamophobia and attacks against Christians we are seeing in some OSCE participating States and in some OSCE Partner countries. We strongly support the OSCE commitments on ensuring Religious Freedom and Tolerance and Non-discrimination as these should be central to our regional stability and security agenda.

We welcome the priority that the Irish OSCE Chairmanship has given to progress on **Good Governance**, a priority that Canada shares. In this context, we support the OSCE's work and role in helping participating States curb corruption, money-laundering, and terrorist financing, and in making governments more accountable and transparent to their citizens.

The lack of progress in **Euro-Atlantic arms control** remains a point of concern, notably the impasse reached in our modernization efforts for the CFE Treaty, the Vienna Document, and Open Skies Treaty. We hope that Dublin can give a political impetus to renewed efforts in 2013 on modernizing and revitalizing regional arms control regimes and our work on military transparency.

Mr. Chairperson,

**On Canada's expectations for Ukraine given its role as the incoming OSCE Chairmanship in 2013**, Canada encourages Ukraine to lead by example. This means fully implementing its OSCE commitments, and particularly those related to the protection and promotion of human rights, democratization and the rule of law.

The back-sliding we are seeing in Ukraine on these key issues is cause for serious concern. The irregularities in Ukraine's recent parliamentary elections are another case in point and seen as a "step backwards" by the OSCE Election Observation team, and by the hundreds of Canadians who were deployed to Ukraine to monitor these elections.

Canada intends to work constructively with the incoming Ukrainian OSCE Chairmanship to address regional security priorities and values that we share. Canada and others will also continue to hold Ukraine to account for the full implementation of its OSCE commitments throughout its Chairmanship year, and beyond.

Thank you/Merci.