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Plenary Session I on “Addressing the Crisis of European Security, the Way forward”

Statement by Ambassador Marios Ieronymides

Permanent Representative of the Republic of Cyprus to the OSCE

Mr. Chairperson,

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of my Minister, I would like to thank our Swiss hosts for the warm hospitality extended to us, and for all their hard work throughout their Chairmanship. Let me also state that Cyprus aligns itself with the statement delivered by the European Union.

Just one year before we celebrate the 40th Anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act, we find ourselves facing one of the biggest crises in our Organisation’s history, which puts our system of collective security in question. However, the OSCE remains the world’s largest regional security organisation, whose main objective of creating an environment of security from Vancouver to Vladivostok, should still guide our work.

Cyprus, as a country that continues to suffer from the aggression and illegal use of force by another participating state, is well aware that building security and confidence is a painful and long process. It is about creating a framework for peace and stability, with democratic values, the Rule of Law, and Human Rights at its core.

Mr. Chairman,

We believe that stability and security can only be re-established in and around Ukraine and the European continent at large, if we engage all actors in an inclusive dialogue, with the aim of reaching a political settlement which will de-escalate the situation in a sustainable manner. In this context, the implementation of the Minsk Protocol and Memorandum remains essential, as well as the continuation of the important work of the Tri-lateral contact group, in achieving a sustainable ceasefire.

MR. Chairperson,

If the OSCE is to live up to our expectations as a conflict prevention and mediation forum, we must provide it with the necessary means and political backing. We must also ensure that its involvement in the conflict cycle conforms to the norms and principles of international law, including the Charter of the United Nations.

Ensuring security in the OSCE region requires further efforts to tackle transnational threats, to prevent and resolve conflicts, to promote Confidence Building Measures, to control conventional arms. We commend the remarkable progress achieved in facilitating agreements on conventional arms control and Confidence Building Measures, which in our view have further potential for development. This is the reason why Cyprus has submitted its application to accede to the Open Skies Treaty; an application which remains pending since 2002.

The security threats posed in today's world are diverse, complex and transnational in nature: the fight against terrorism, organised crime, illicit drug trafficking, illegal migration, are scourges which transcend borders, and need to be tackled collectively and comprehensively.

As a Mediterranean country, Cyprus attaches particular importance to strengthening dialogue and cooperation with our Mediterranean Partners in all three dimensions, in order to meet today's challenges in our turbulent region. At this year's Mediterranean Conference, we reiterated our commitment to the fight against terrorism, in all its forms and manifestations. The battle against ISIL/Da'esh requires commitment and strengthened international cooperation, which should include combatting the financing of terrorism and the full implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 2178.

Mr. Chairperson,

Our commitments in the human dimension are also an integral part of the OSCE's collective security system, and a priority area for my Government. As a country whose citizens' human rights have been grossly violated as a result of foreign aggression, Cyprus maintains its principled position, that respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms cannot be compromised under any circumstances. All participating States, with the valuable contribution of relevant OSCE institutions must step up their efforts to ensure implementation of our commitments, including freedom of expression, freedom of assembly and association, tolerance and non-discrimination.

Mr. Chairperson,

We have all identified and elaborated on the critical security challenges which the OSCE region is faced with. Furthermore, we have all reaffirmed our commitment to cooperate in finding lasting and sustainable solutions. Let me express the view that the OSCE, with its extensive membership and consensus-based toolbox is and should be maintained as a "result-oriented" platform for dialogue, which can lead to sustainable solutions through peaceful and diplomatic means.

In concluding, I wish to thank our Swiss colleagues once again for the important work they have done, and extend to the incoming Serbian Chairmanship our best wishes for success, while assuring them of our full support and cooperation.

Thank you Mr. Chairperson.