

OSCE Ministerial Council, Dublin, 6-7 December 2012

Statement by H.E. Villy Søvndal

Minister for Foreign Affairs, Denmark

Mr. Chairman,

Allow me first to thank you and your team for your **dedicated efforts preparing for this meeting** and for your **excellent leadership throughout this year**. It has been a pleasure working with you, including during the Danish EU presidency in the first half of this year.

Denmark **warmly welcomes Mongolia** as the 57th participating state in the OSCE. The expansion of our organisation underlines its continued relevance - and its crucial role in building a democratic and indivisible security community in our common area.

OSCE's comprehensive concept of security and its principles and commitments are a **solid foundation for peace and stability** between states, as well as for the **security and fundamental rights of our citizens**. These principles and commitments should guide us as we prepare for the 40th anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act in 2015.

Mr. Chairman,

Human rights and fundamental freedoms, democracy and the rule of law lie **at the core of security**. It is of utmost importance that we continue to promote these values and fulfil our commitments. **Strong support for the autonomous OSCE institutions is essential.**

Media freedom is of particular importance to Denmark. Independent media is a natural and necessary part of every free and democratic society. In the digital age, it is important for the OSCE and its states to **recognize the internet** as a crucial area where media freedom has to be assured and strengthened.

Denmark therefore **strongly supports the work of the Representative on Freedom of the Media** and hopes for a substantial decision on media freedom.

We highly commend the professional and transparent manner in which ODIHR fulfils its mandate. We call on the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly to **remain committed to our common goals** on the basis of the 1997 Copenhagen Cooperation Agreement.

I would also like to stress the importance of the **field missions** as a very important asset of OSCE. Denmark will continue to contribute to projects, including in Central Asia where we believe OSCE adds high value. We will also work actively to strengthen **the practice of independent reviews** of projects to further improve the important work done by the field missions.

Mr. Chairman,

It is essential that conflicts are prevented, existing conflicts are solved and that confidence is built in the politico-military sphere. I commend the Irish chair for its tireless efforts in dealing with the protracted conflicts, including by drawing on valuable experience from the Northern Ireland peace process.

Next year we look forward to continue this work together with the **Ukrainian Chairman-in-Office**. In this regard, we expect Ukraine to uphold and promote all existing OSCE commitments and to step up efforts of OSCE in all three dimensions, in particular the human dimension. Denmark looks forward to close cooperation and we ensure Ukraine of our support.

Thank you for your attention.