

STATEMENT
by the Minister of Foreign Affairs
of the Republic of Belarus, Mr.V.Makei,
at the Plenary Session of the OSCE Ministerial Council
(Basel, 4 December 2014)

Dear Mr. Chairman,

Dear Colleagues,

At the previous OSCE Ministerial Meeting in Kiev I shared with you considerations regarding the attempts by some partners to push forward their priorities to the detriment of other states, to use “double standards”, political and economic sanctions, which not only fail to bring us nearer to the intended goals of strengthening security and cooperation, but on the contrary take us away from Helsinki values and principles.

Unfortunately, developments of the last year have proved more than vividly the relevance of our fears. The political crisis in Ukraine, which was caused largely by the mentioned reasons, has degraded to a bloody armed conflict that has brought along devastation and sufferings, claimed lives of thousands of innocent people.

Tragic developments in Ukraine have triggered an unprecedented for the past few decades increase of tension in Europe, and sharpened the accumulated contradictions. Against this backdrop, **the comprehensive problems in the security sphere in the OSCE area** have become even more evident. Reminiscences of the cold war times evoked in many minds.

Today we have come close to a dangerous line, behind which another world is looming – quite different from the world dreamt of by the “founding fathers” of the Helsinki process.

It is essential that we should jointly **undertake urgent and decisive efforts aimed at preventing the whipping up of a spiral of recriminations, threats and sanctions**. We should cast away the logic of confrontation and resume mutually respectful and constructive dialogue.

This is indeed our vision of the mission of the OSCE, which was meant primarily as an instrument to overcome disagreements, approximate positions, strengthen common security.

Preventing the emergence of new dividing lines in the region, maintaining the unity of participating States with regard to values and principles, which were at the core of our Organization, conflict prevention and settlement must remain the OSCE’s long-term key tasks.

We support the efforts of the current Swiss and forthcoming Serbian Chairmanships aimed at giving **new momentum to the ongoing discussions within the framework of the “Helsinki + 40” process, including the idea of establishing a High-level Panel of Eminent Persons.** The contradictions that have sharpened recently should not motivate the refusal to seek solutions to complex issues at the OSCE agenda; rather they should encourage a more active work.

We deem it essential to engage the OSCE platform for the practical implementation of the idea of “integration of integrations”, which aims at promoting dialogue and interaction between different integration formations in the OSCE area.

In conclusion, let me convey the words of gratitude to the Chairperson-in-Office, Didier Burkhalter, for the solid input the Swiss Chairmanship made in the work of our Organization during the current year, which was anything but simple, as well as to wish Serbia a successful work in its capacity of the OSCE Chair in 2015.

Thank you for your attention.