

MC.DEL/1/17
7 December 2017

ENGLISH
Original: RUSSIAN

**JOINT STATEMENT BY
THE MINISTERS FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS
OF THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA, THE REPUBLIC OF BELARUS,
THE REPUBLIC OF KAZAKHSTAN, THE KYRGYZ REPUBLIC AND
THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION AT THE TWENTY-FOURTH MEETING
OF THE OSCE MINISTERIAL COUNCIL**

Vienna, 7 December 2017

On connectivity and alignment of integration processes in the OSCE area

We, the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Armenia, the Republic of Belarus, the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic and the Russian Federation,

Recognizing the key importance of the economic and environmental dimension in the OSCE concept of common, comprehensive and indivisible security and a common security space free of dividing lines,

Reaffirming that economic co-operation in the OSCE area, including connectivity, should be based on solidarity, transparency, equal and non-discriminatory partnership, on mutual accountability and full respect for the interests of all OSCE participating States,

Conscious of the growing role of international trade as one of the most important factors in economic growth and social progress,

Underlining the importance of the abandonment by the OSCE participating States of the logic of dividing lines and closed borders, unilateral economic sanctions, economic blockade, visa and other restrictive measures, and exclusion from regional economic projects,

Convinced that joint efforts to develop co-operation in the fields of trade, transport, energy, investment, the environment and other areas of economic activity contribute to confidence-building and the strengthening of peace and security in Europe and in the world as a whole,

Conscious that global economic challenges and growing worldwide economic interdependence call for more effective common efforts towards the solution of major global economic problems,

Recognizing that regional and subregional integration processes and agreements can impart a powerful impulse to trade and economic development in the OSCE area and the OSCE participating States,

Reaffirming that co-operation between participating States as well as between international and regional organizations of which they are members is one of the main ways of strengthening security and stability and preventing possible conflicts in the OSCE area,

Call upon the OSCE participating States to redouble their efforts to achieve the strategic goal of the OSCE Astana Summit – the formation of a free, democratic, common and indivisible Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian security community;

Are convinced that there is an urgent need to build bridges and advance the alignment of integration processes in the OSCE area, primarily with a view to expanding economic co-operation and increasing the level of trust among the OSCE participating States, and also creating the prerequisites for the formation of a common economic space from Vancouver to Vladivostok;

Invite the participating States to take additional measures aimed at the facilitation of mutual trade and development of multimodal international transport corridors, including the necessary transborder transport infrastructure, and the harmonization of customs procedures based on equal partnership and without detriment to one another's interests; to continue to assist one another to speed up the integration of our countries' economies into the global economic and financial system, first and foremost through their early accession to the World Trade Organization (WTO);

Call upon the participating States to use the OSCE as a platform for dialogue and joint efforts of international and regional organizations, operating in its area of responsibility, aimed at facilitating economic connectivity, removing barriers in various areas of economic co-operation, ensuring sustainable economic growth, developing the digital economy, and also aimed at greater interaction between integration processes in the OSCE area;

Emphasize that the alignment of integration processes in the OSCE area would make a substantial contribution to the construction of a real security community free of dividing lines and based on co-operation, mutual trust and consideration for the interests of each participating State;

Call upon the incoming Italian Chairmanship and the OSCE participating States to intensify dialogue in this regard in 2018, including by organizing special events at the political and expert level.