

**Statement by Minister for Foreign Affairs,  
Mr. Erkki Tuomioja,  
at the twentieth meeting of the OSCE Ministerial Council  
in Kyiv on 5 December, 2013**

Mr. Chairman,  
Secretary General,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

I am delighted to speak on behalf of Finland at the 20th OSCE Ministerial Council in Kyiv. Let me thank you for your hospitality and congratulate you and your able team in Vienna and Kiev for your commitment this year. In our view, you have succeeded in presenting a good set of deliverables at this Ministerial Council meeting. You can count on our continued support in the final stages of your Chairmanship.

We are gathered here at the time when the commitments and principles of the OSCE are being tested. It is of utmost importance to fully abide by our common international commitments. Violence against those exercising their right to freedom of speech and peaceful assembly must be condemned in Kyiv and everywhere.

Mr. Chairman,

As the 40th anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act is approaching, we need to move forward in the Helsinki +40 process. Firstly, this is vital for the future of the OSCE. We, as participating States, need to ensure that the Organization keeps up to date. Secondly, this process is an opportunity to strengthen mutual trust and confidence and improve co-operation among the participating States.

Therefore, Mr. Chairman, we have fully supported the efforts to accomplish Helsinki +40 Declaration. We look forward to the continuation of the process and hope to see substantial results over the coming year. Moreover, we welcome the input from civil society and the established OSCE academic network to the process. Finland is also pleased to host the Annual Session of OSCE Parliamentary Assembly in 2015 in Helsinki.

Mr. Chairman,

It is our responsibility as participating States to continue efforts towards a free, democratic, common and indivisible Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian security community, as was set out by the Astana Declaration. Needless to say, this objective should be enhanced in a constructive and co-operative manner, and be based on the comprehensive approach to security.

It is important to intensify work towards modernizing arms control, confidence and

security building measures. Promotion of security and stability through military transparency is important also in today's environment. We also need to support efforts towards solving the protracted conflicts. The full potential of the economic and environmental co-operation could be further explored.

Furthermore, we should strive towards full implementation of human dimension commitments. In this respect, elimination of discrimination as well as greater openness and inclusion are of major importance to Finland, as outlined in our reasonably new Human Rights Strategy and Action Plan of the Foreign Service.

Regardless of the challenges the Organization is facing, we believe that the OSCE has plenty to offer. Based on common values of democracy, human rights and the rule of law, the OSCE is doing invaluable work through, inter alia, its field presence, institutions and secretariat. Finland welcomes the request of the Mongolian government for an OSCE presence.

It is commendable that the participating States have recently agreed to elaborate confidence-building measures in cyber security through the creation of greater transparency and better networking of national experts. Furthermore, Finland welcomes the decision to send an election support team to Afghanistan to assist efforts on the presidential and Provincial Council elections next year. The situation in Afghanistan, next year and beyond, has an impact on the OSCE region as a whole. The OSCE through its presence in Central Asia can play a role in this regard, and Finland continues to support these field activities.

We also highly value the co-operation with Partners for Co-operation and see a merit in inviting Libya as a new Partner to the OSCE.

Mr. Chairman,

Finland has been active in promoting mediation and in bolstering its support structures at global and regional levels. The full involvement of women in peace processes is of utmost importance. The simple fact is that more than half of world's population is women. Their rights must be respected, civil and political rights as well as economic, social and cultural rights, not forgetting their sexual and reproductive rights.

Finland, together with Austria, Turkey and Kazakhstan, has worked for an OSCE-wide action plan for implementation of United Nations Security Council resolution 1325 (Women, Peace and Security). We are ready to continue this work.

Next year will mark the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the adoption of the 2004 OSCE Gender Action Plan. This anniversary should be an opportunity to reflect – what has been achieved and what more could be done to promote gender equality within the OSCE.

In conclusion, I should like to express my thanks once again to you Mr. Chairman for your commitment this year and to wish the incoming Swiss and Serbian Chairmanships every success.

Thank you very much.