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**STATEMENT BY
MR. SERGEY LAVROV, MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF
THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION, AT THE NINETEENTH MEETING OF
THE OSCE MINISTERIAL COUNCIL**

Dublin, 6 December 2012

Madam Chairperson,
Mr. Secretary General of the OSCE,
Mr. President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly,
Ladies and gentlemen,

First of all, I should like to join in congratulating Mongolia. I hope that our Mongolian friends will contribute to the work of the OSCE.

Two years have elapsed since the leaders of our countries agreed at the OSCE Summit in Astana to build a common and indivisible Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian security community stretching from Vancouver to Vladivostok. We all sincerely hoped that this noble goal, which is consistent with the Russian idea of a Treaty on European Security, would unite our countries and that the Organization itself would become a forum for open dialogue based on equal rights that really fosters greater confidence, mutual understanding and co-operation.

Unfortunately, the accomplishment of these tasks is hindered for the present by the persistence of unilateral approaches that hamper a pooling of efforts.

As a result, the OSCE finds itself on the sidelines of the key processes in the Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian region, and the objective need to unite our countries on the basis of common tasks and interests is coming up against actions that are counter to partnership, leading to a deepening of old dividing lines and the formation of new ones contrary to fundamental OSCE principles.

The commitment enshrined in the Charter for European Security that States should not strengthen their own security at the expense of the security of others is not being implemented in practice. You know our point of view, and we believe that this phenomenon is revealed with particular clarity in the plans to establish a European anti-missile defence system.

Generally speaking, the situation in the politico-military dimension of the OSCE is characterized by degradation of the conventional arms control regime and uncertainty surrounding the prospects for strengthening confidence and security. These are the

consequences of attempts over many years to use arms control as an instrument for achieving political goals.

Approaches of this kind distract from productive collective work to counter the transnational threats faced by all of us. Terrorism is acquiring ever newer guises, with people like Anders Breivik and the Toulouse gunman appearing on the scene. Public sentiments are being radicalized. Organized crime and trafficking in human beings and human organs are on the rise. No one is secure from man-made and natural disasters. The proliferation of narcotic drugs – natural and especially synthetic – is taking on sophisticated forms.

Things are by no means easy in our economic co-operation. The eurozone is experiencing a period of recession. People are losing their jobs, social tension is growing and the police are forced to suppress protest demonstrations. The right of citizens to work and to a dignified existence is being forgotten. The practice of using sanctions, which contravenes the commitments of the Helsinki Final Act, is continuing.

Russia has for a long time been urging the OSCE to pay attention to the socio-economic aspects of human rights. We hope that life will force us to develop pragmatic co-operation within the OSCE's second basket, including good governance and the fight against corruption.

Overall Russia adheres to its international commitments in the area of ensuring human rights and advocates their implementation in full measure by all States.

We are therefore concerned that visa barriers continue to exist in the OSCE area. Commitments in the Helsinki Final Act that in 1975 were aimed at eliminating the Iron Curtain are not being implemented. Today we are encountering similar obstacles in the visa dialogue with the European Union. For several years now, our proposals regarding the implementation of the commitments to ensure freedom of movement have been rejected in the OSCE. We hope that a substantive dialogue on this problem will be able to commence in 2013.

We are alarmed that neo-Nazism is raising its head in Europe. Waffen SS veterans hold marches and monuments are erected to Nazis. It is regrettable against this background that it has proved impossible to achieve consensus in the OSCE on the draft decision on combating neo-Nazism and aggressive nationalism.

This year was full of elections. They were held in Russia, the United States of America, France, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Ukraine and a number of other countries. Double standards appeared once again in the election observation work of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights. Hundreds of observers were sent to one place, while just a few to another. The same facts, for example early elections, were assessed differently in different countries. We urgently call for a comparative analysis of the election laws of all the OSCE countries and the drawing up of election observation rules. A draft Ministerial Council decision on this subject was put forward by Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan.

Hundreds of thousands of people in the European Union are not entitled to vote. They are "non-citizens". It is revealing how easily the Latvian authorities put aside democratic principles in calling off the collection of signatures in favour of a referendum on the elimination of statelessness. This is a serious problem for both the OSCE and the European

Union. It needs to be resolved in line with the recommendations of international organizations.

Questions arise with increasing frequency regarding the rights of children born into mixed marriages. Ultimately they suffer when children's services unlawfully remove them from their families or prevent them from returning to their homeland. We propose that the OSCE should begin a dialogue in 2013 on this sensitive humanitarian problem.

Much attention has been paid in the OSCE of late to the topic of the Internet. Confidence-building measures are being drawn up as regards the use of information and communication technologies. This is important work and it should continue.

We have studied the proposals on the extension of freedoms existing in real life to cyberspace. This is a complex topic. The Internet encompasses many spheres – from human interaction to commerce, advertising, copyright and the protection of personal data. One need only recall the public reaction to the signing of the Anti-Counterfeiting Trade Agreement (ACTA). Crimes are committed using the Internet – from fraud and cyberattacks to the sale of narcotic drugs and the organization of terrorist attacks. Questions also arise as to national sovereignty and the responsibility of the companies who control cyberspace and derive large profits from it. All of it needs to be discussed as a whole.

The invasion of the privacy of citizens, including wiretapping and the interception of correspondence, is a pressing problem in the context of information and communication technologies. We have put forward a draft decision on this subject and are looking forward to constructive dialogue on it.

Regional conflicts pose a serious threat to security. Many of them, for example the Cypriot settlement process, are more than a decade old. We welcome the initiative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office to familiarize the participating States with the experience gained in the search for ways of solving the Northern Ireland problem.

Tension persists in Kosovo, where inter-ethnic incidents continue and the rights of the non-Albanian population are violated. We believe that the negotiation process between Belgrade and Pristina is the main instrument for stabilizing the situation. United Nations Security Council resolution 1244 remains the legal basis. The international presences in the territory, including the OSCE mission, should adhere strictly to their mandates on a status-neutral basis.

We support the continuation of dialogue on a Transdniestrian settlement within the "5+2" format. We are ready to contribute to the systematic strengthening of confidence-building measures and practical co-operation, creating conditions in this way for an agreement on a viable and just political solution to the Transdniestrian problem.

Together with the other Co-Chairmen of the OSCE Minsk Group – the United States and France – we shall continue to work to bring about a rapprochement between the parties in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. We see no alternatives for a settlement other than on the basis of peaceful negotiations between the parties to the conflict. The proposals of the Minsk Group Co-Chairmen in this regard are very well known.

The Geneva Discussions on stability and security in the Trans-Caucasus remain an important stabilizing factor in the region. The main thing is for all the participants to recognize the existing reality today and not to try to erode the agreed agenda.

Distinguished colleagues,

In three years time we shall mark the 40th anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act. We supported the Irish initiative to launch the Helsinki+40 process.

Russia has for a long time been advocating the reform of the OSCE, the correction of imbalances in its work and the strengthening of its legal foundations through the drafting of a legally binding charter.

The negotiations on the admission of Mongolia to the OSCE showed that our Organization also needs to draw up uniform membership criteria.

The European Union aspires to a more significant role in the OSCE. We are ready to consider proposals on changing OSCE procedures as regards the development of contacts with international bodies, including the European Union, the Collective Security Treaty Organization and the Eurasian Economic Commission.

All the aforementioned, and some additional, aspects of the long overdue reforms have to be examined during the Helsinki+40 process. Russia will participate in this in a constructive and pragmatic manner. We hope for a positive outcome.

In conclusion, I should like to thank the Irish Chairmanship for the work it has done, the excellent organization of the Ministerial Council meeting and its hospitality and to wish our Ukrainian friends every success next year.