



**STATEMENT BY H.E. DR. MARIO NOBILO,
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IN THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND EUROPEAN
INTEGRATION OF THE REPUBLIC OF CROATIA**

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Mr. Chairperson, Distinguished Ministers, Excellences, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my honor and indeed a pleasure to address the meeting of the OSCE Ministerial Council on behalf of the Republic of Croatia. At the outset, let me thank the Lithuanian Chairmanship for excellent organization of the meeting, for their warm hospitality, and for steering our work with political wisdom and dedication.

Astana Commemorative Declaration – Towards Security Community recommitted all of us to the vision of a free, democratic, common and indivisible Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian security community. The achievement of that vision requires from us more political will. It is high time that we act individually and together on our OSCE commitments and not just declare our adherence to them. We must work with greater determination through the OSCE comprehensive concept of security, which is our biggest asset and greatest strength.

Our Organization must be fully engaged in resolving the contemporary challenges, like transnational threats and protracted conflicts as well as other security related problems affecting our countries and its citizens. We believe that our Organization should strengthen its capacities in all stages of conflict cycle. Equally, our commitments in the human dimension require constant vigilance because security

of every individual first and foremost derives from the respect and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Another important issue for the OSCE is further strengthening of relations with our Partners for Cooperation, and that should be our joint objective, especially in view of recent and current political developments in Maghreb and Mashreq. We should stand ready to answer to the needs of our Partners and, together with them, to foster a substantive program of activities in all three OSCE dimensions. We consider also that Mongolia's interest to become a participating State of the OSCE should be reciprocated with a positive decision.

Mr. Chairperson,

The action to achieve the vision from Astana begins first and foremost on the territories of our own countries. In that respect, allow me to remind you that Croatia has undergone through three specific transition processes in the last two decades – from a socialist to a democratic society, from war to peace and stability; and as the first EU candidate to go through stricter negotiation process. Croatia is also pursuing an active and constructive regional policy of building good relations and resolving all open issues through dialogue, and we expect our neighbors to follow the same objectives.

This year, Croatia will achieve an important milestone in its history. In just a few days from now, on 9th December in Brussels, Croatia will sign the Accession Treaty with the EU, with a view to becoming 28th member state on 1st July 2013. As a new EU member state, we will continue our unambiguous efforts in further promoting security, stability and development of South East Europe, and will surely work diligently on helping other countries on their path towards European and Euro-Atlantic integrations.

Mr. Chairperson,

Undoubtedly, 15 years of OSCE presence in Croatia contributed a great deal to the end of the conflict, as well as to the overall democratic development of my country.

After gradual closure of the Mission at the end of 2007, the OSCE role was limited to the issues of monitoring of domestic war crimes trials and the implementation of

the Housing Care Program for Returnees. Concrete and tangible results have been achieved in both of these remaining areas of the Office's mandate and there is a strong legacy of the lessons learned, the mature and capable civil society organizations as well as independent and efficient national judiciary. This is recognized by a number of the OSCE participating States, as well as by the OSCE Office in Zagreb which thus concluded that there are compelling reasons to consider the overall mandate fully implemented. In this situation, Croatia, as well as a large majority of participating States, believes that it is time to close the OSCE Office in Zagreb by the end of this year.

Closure of the OSCE Office in Zagreb can figure as a positive example and a model for future decisions in other countries and regions, when conditions related to the full implementation of the mandates of the OSCE field presences are met. We still remain confident that a positive decision is possible for the benefit of our Organization.

Let me conclude by wishing the incoming Irish Chairmanship all the success in their important task of leading our Organization in 2012. I can assure you of Croatia's active and constructive contribution as well as full cooperation through all three OSCE dimensions.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.