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REPUBLIC OF SERBIA

CLOSING REMARKS

by

His Excellency Mr. Ivica Dačić
First Deputy Prime Minister and
Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia
at the XXI Ministerial Council Meeting of the
Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

Basel, 5 December 2014

Mr. Chairperson,
Mr. Secretary General,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Allow me at the outset to thank once again the Chairman-in-Office President Burkhalter for the hospitality we have enjoyed during our stay in Basel. I would like to thank your hardworking team, as well as the Secretary General and his dedicated staff, for the exceptional organization of the Ministerial Conference.

My sincere thanks goes to all of you for your words of congratulations and support to the incoming Serbian Chairmanship and myself as the next Chairman-in-Office. Let me reassure you that we take these words as a sign of trust placed in my country to lead this organization in these difficult and unpredictable circumstances. We expect that this support of 56 participating States will continue during next year at all times and through all the challenges. We count and rely on you.

This Ministerial Council was held at a critical juncture. It yielded several important decisions and declarations in different areas of our work. Despite the fact that the current circumstances prevented the elaboration of a more substantive document on Helsinki +40, the declaration that we have just adopted shows the significance we attach to this process and awareness of its necessity. I expect that the panel of eminent persons will make a significant input to our efforts to restore trust and confidence among participating States. It should offer its expertise and experience to complement our efforts to establish an inclusive and constructive security dialogue.

There is general concurrence that the Ukrainian crisis has a negative impact on the security and stability in the OSCE region and beyond. Different perceptions of the root causes and erosion of trust and confidence led to escalation of the current crisis and these issues need to be addressed urgently. OSCE, as a unique platform for dialogue and at the same time an operational responder, provides adequate tools for the peaceful resolution not only of this crisis, but also of the protracted conflicts on the agenda of our Organization. We all need to put additional efforts to pledge our collective support for their settlement by peaceful diplomatic and inclusive means and through agreed formats.

I wish to stress once again that the main priority of our work will be to continue addressing the crisis in Ukraine in a way which will give impetus to a comprehensive peace process. We intend to work with the main stakeholders on the peaceful resolution of this crisis and we reiterate the importance of implementing the Minsk documents by all in order to move forward. We hope that high level political efforts and the efforts of the Trilateral Contact Group will contribute significantly to achieving breakthrough towards that end.

One of the priorities of Swiss and Serbian consecutive Chairmanships is the Western Balkans and that is certainly something we plan to put focus on during next year. I believe our region is on the right track and we hope that our Chairmanship will give additional impulse to the regional cooperation. As a candidate country for EU accession, Serbia is genuinely committed to enhancing cooperation with the neighboring states and the region as a whole.

Mr. Chairperson,

Serious, complex and urgent tasks lie ahead of us as we approach 2015 and as we take over the Chairmanship of the OSCE. Our Organization is in the spotlight. We believe there is an opportunity to make a determined step forward and overcome divisions. We can achieve this only through a joint and inclusive effort.

I take this opportunity to congratulate the incoming member of Troika – Germany, as well as Austria, on the decision to take on the Chairmanship in 2016 and 2017 respectively.

In the year marking the 40th anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act, we will strive to restore trust and confidence among the participating States and make our Organization more efficient and relevant. To succeed again as we have in the past, we need to stay true to respecting its principles and undertaken commitments lying at the core of our security and cooperation. That is a challenging path and I am certain it will take us a lot of knowledge, creativity, patience and courage to reach our goal.

We hope that next year in Belgrade, when we welcome you at the end of the year, we will be at least one important step closer to this goal than we are today.

Thank you Mr. Chairperson.