



**NORWEGIAN MINISTRY
OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

STATEMENT BY THE FOREIGN MINISTER OF NORWAY,

H.E. Børge Brende,

at the 21st Meeting of the OSCE Ministerial Council,

Basel, 4-5 December 2014

Mr Chairman,

We are facing a crisis that never should have occurred in modern Europe.

As Secretary Kerry said in his intervention, this is not a failure of the international system. It is caused by a failure to live up to our OSCE commitments and international law.

Mr Chairman,

In this crisis, the OSCE took on a role that no other organisation was able to play.

This crisis has underscored the importance of all of our OSCE tools.

However, our conflict resolution capability remains insufficient and ad hoc. Our financial mechanisms are not sustainable.

We need to invest in the OSCE, in its institutions and in its field missions.

We need to give the OSCE a stronger foundation.

Security cooperation in Europe is more crucial today than it has been for decades.

Mr Chairman,

We are making only limited progress in the human dimension. The spirit of cooperation and compromise has been weakened.

Of even greater concern is the fact that many OSCE participating States are failing to implement commitments we have already made.

Mr Chairman,

This year, Ukraine has taken important steps towards much-needed democratic and economic reform.

We must all help to make Ukraine's new course sustainable. Norway will certainly do its share.

Mr Chairman,

The Russian Federation holds the key to a better future for the Ukrainian people. We therefore urge Russia to implement the Minsk Protocol and Memorandum in good faith.

Russia bears a clear responsibility for the crisis, both because of its illegal annexation of Crimea and because of the destabilisation of Eastern Ukraine.

Russia's actions have also caused anxiety and insecurity in other countries.

The so-called agreement on alliance and strategic partnership entered into between Russia and the Georgian breakaway region of Abkhazia is another example of breach of the principles of international law.

Russia must return to the principles of Helsinki and respect the territorial integrity and sovereignty of other States, whether Ukraine, Georgia or Moldova.

Only then can we hope to realise the vision of a free, democratic, common and indivisible Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian security community.

Mr Chairman, I commend you for your hard work in a difficult year.

To Minister Dačić, I would like to say that you can count on my full support as you assume the Chairmanship.