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**STATEMENT BY MR. GONZALO DE BENITO SECADES,
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF SPAIN,
AT THE TWENTIETH MEETING OF THE
OSCE MINISTERIAL COUNCIL**

Kyiv, 5 and 6 December 2013

Mr. Chairperson,

Spain firmly believes that the OSCE plays an essential role in the task that unites us all of promoting and consolidating co-operation and security in our geographic space (Europe), in neighbouring areas and throughout the world.

Barely three years ago at the Summit Meeting of Heads of State or Government in Astana we confirmed our aspiration to forge a security community in the OSCE area and our desire to continue developing the three dimensions.

The decisions and declarations that will be adopted at this Twentieth Ministerial Council should enable us to make progress in this endeavour. They should also serve as a basis in the next two years during the Chairmanships of Switzerland and Serbia for continuing to prepare for the 40th anniversary of the signing of the Helsinki Final Act.

Mr. Chairperson,

Spain would like to reiterate its commitment to the aim of forming a genuine pan-European security community that would give substance to our vision of a free, democratic, common and indivisible Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian security community. Nor should it be forgotten that the security of the OSCE area is indissolubly linked with that of the adjacent areas, above all the Mediterranean, but also Asia.

Spain is of the firm conviction that the general willingness that all of us here share to co-operate in strengthening the three OSCE dimensions should crystallize into specific results.

As far as politico-military aspects of security are concerned, we must progress towards the return to an efficient arms control regime in Europe, which we would also like to see extended in the medium term to the entire OSCE area. At the same time, we must intensify efforts to update the confidence- and security-building measures contained in the Vienna Document so as to be able in the medium and long term to continue to ensure the confidence and transparency that are so important for the security community.

We must also continue to improve our capability for responding to the growing transnational threats, notably attacks on cybersecurity, a challenge that is of particular importance in the twenty-first century, and combating illicit drug trafficking and terrorism.

Regarding terrorism, a scourge that Spain has unfortunately been familiar with for years, I should like today to pay homage to all of the victims and to assure them of our sympathy and solidarity. On their behalf I should like to express my gratitude to all of the participating States, especially the relevant actors in the OSCE itself, for the co-operation that they have always shown to us in this effort.

Mr. Chairperson,

The issues in the second dimension are particularly relevant in this period of economic and financial difficulties, which affects a good number of participating States in this Organization.

The OSCE is destined to play a significant role in the building of mutual confidence and co-operation in achieving sustainable economic and environmental development. The adoption of the draft decisions on improving the environmental footprint of energy-related activities and on protection of the energy infrastructure would be a further step in our endeavours.

Mr. Chairperson,

The Spanish Government will continue to defend the undeniable and direct link between respect for human rights, democracy, the rule of law and security. Respect for human rights is a priority in Spain's foreign policy. The OSCE has an extremely valuable *acquis* in this area involving obligations that we must all meet. We hope that the draft proposals by the Ukrainian Chairmanship under discussion will be adopted. If they are, our democracies will be strengthened and our security reinforced. In a world in which information is a fundamental right, the protection of journalists is a priority for Spain – as are freedom of thought and religion, protection of the minority groups in the OSCE area such as Roma and Sinti, and combating trafficking in human beings.

Mr. Chairperson,

At the start of my statement I referred to the relevance of the security of neighbouring regions for the security of the OSCE.

In that context, Spain firmly supports the OSCE commitment to Afghanistan and hopes that this Ministerial Council will adopt a declaration reinforcing our assistance in the new phase that will start next year.

I should like to reiterate our interest in greater co-operation with the countries on the south shore of the Mediterranean, with which Spain is carrying out specific projects on issues of interest to our Organization, in particular the mediation initiative launched by Spain and Morocco and the joint water management initiative between Spain and Algeria, both of which are aimed at the Mediterranean region.

I would like to recall that in this region we are witnessing a historical process of consolidation of new democratic systems and appeal to the OSCE to pay the necessary attention to all facets of Euro-Mediterranean security.

Mr. Chairperson,

I should like here to reaffirm Spain's commitment to the building of open, tolerant, inclusive and democratic societies with institutions that satisfy the desire for dignity and development of their citizens.

I am fully confident that moderation and dialogue will make it possible to find a negotiated solution to the current situation in Ukraine, our host. I am convinced that this objective will guide the authorities and people of this great country towards the hand and friendship proffered to them by Europe. It is only in this way that we will manage to make progress together on the path of co-operation, growth and security to the advantage of everyone.

I should like to conclude by congratulating the Ukrainian authorities for the good work carried out during their Chairmanship, express gratitude for the warm welcome extended to us in Kyiv and wish Switzerland every success for its Chairmanship in 2014 in the knowledge that it can rely on the full support of Spain.

Thank you.