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**STATEMENT BY MR. KARL VIKTOR ERJAVEC,  
MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE REPUBLIC OF  
SLOVENIA, AT THE TWENTY-FIRST MEETING OF THE  
OSCE MINISTERIAL COUNCIL**

Basel, 4 and 5 December 2014

Mr. Chairperson,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

In addition to the statement made earlier by the European Union, I should like first to thank the Swiss Chairmanship, particularly President Burkhalter and his team, most sincerely for their noteworthy work during their Chairmanship of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe during this time of considerable security challenges.

The efforts of Switzerland and its excellent management of the largest security organization in close collaboration with its Secretariat and institutions have enabled us to respond to the crisis in Ukraine with all due attention and professionalism.

The OSCE is operating in Ukraine through the various mechanisms and instruments that we have at our disposal in accordance with different mandates. Allow me to take this opportunity to thank all those who have contributed in various ways through their active commitment to the de-escalation of the conflict and the search for diplomatic solutions to this crisis.

Moreover, Slovenia welcomes the collaboration between international organizations and supports effective multilateral co-operation to resolve the crisis in Ukraine and other drawn-out conflicts in the OSCE area. This co-operation should be intensified in all areas that could help secure stability and comprehensive security for all States and their citizens.

The complex and severe crisis in Ukraine jeopardizes the stability and security of the entire OSCE region. It puts to the test the principles we have embraced since the 1970s and the values and rules that govern stable and structured international relations.

The OSCE is a platform suitable for dialogue acceptable for all and needs to remain a key international organization for consultation on questions of global security. We must continue the dialogue between the United Nations, NATO, the European Union, the OSCE and the Council of Europe, as occurred at the NATO summit in Wales.

Slovenia is persuaded that the crisis in Ukraine can be resolved only by peaceful means around the negotiating table. We urge all parties to come together and resolve all of their differences in good faith. To that end, we must respect the commitments that we have been working on for decades. The Helsinki principles must be observed in all conflicts and crisis situations, and the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine should also be fully respected. In that regard, I should like to congratulate the Swiss Chairmanship for its efforts within the Trilateral Contact Group that led to the signature of the Minsk Protocol and agreements; we should like to stress the extreme importance of implementing all elements of these agreements.

As long as the OSCE participating States persevere in their commitment to combating all security challenges of whatever nature, this Organization will retain its value. In that context, we support the Helsinki+40 process and all efforts aimed at implementing the commitments undertaken by the participating States.

Mr. Chairperson,

I should also like to stress that Slovenia advocates the use of mediation for the peaceful settlement of differences and for the prevention and resolution of conflicts. The regional organizations have developed good preventive diplomacy and mediation practices, such as effective partnerships and synergies between organizations, and a multidimensional approach. In doing so they contribute considerably to the work of the United Nations.

The OSCE plays an important role in this area. As a member of the United Nations Group of Friends of Mediation, the OSCE makes an important contribution to discussion on the role of regional organizations in mediation. Current discourse is all too often marked by mutual mistrust, confrontation and accusations, when we should be taking advantage of all opportunities to facilitate dialogue, mediation and other peaceful means of combating the current crisis.

We hope that here in Basel we will be capable of demonstrating that the efforts to resolve the crisis in Ukraine and to promote democratic changes have proved that the values and principles inscribed in the Helsinki Final Act adopted almost 40 years ago are still relevant and respected.

We regret the absence of progress in the area of conventional arms control and confidence- and security-building measures. We are also seeing some of their elements and real objectives eroding, particularly in the context of the crisis in Ukraine.

Slovenia hopes, however, that some of the ministerial decisions and declarations, such as those proposed by the Chairmanship, will be adopted at this meeting of the Ministerial Council. I should like to recall that we need to reach consensus on economic, environmental, humanitarian and politico-military questions and on multidimensional issues so as to regain control of the mechanisms that will enable us to construct a genuine security community.

Slovenia has endeavoured to play its role and contribute to the implementation of OSCE commitments. I should like in this context to emphasize that respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms is a key element in the OSCE's concept of comprehensive security. Since the protection of human rights is one of the priorities on the foreign policy

agenda of the Republic of Slovenia, we have applied for membership of the United Nations Human Rights Council for the period 2016 to 2018.

Mr. Chairperson,

On the subject of positive developments, this year we can mention the respect for commitments under Article 4 of the Dayton Peace Accords shown by Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Croatia and Serbia. Through their actions, these countries have demonstrated their maturity and sense of responsibility for the stability of South-Eastern Europe. The agreement on the appropriation and effective application of these international commitments serves as a good example of how confidence can be established within the OSCE.

In conclusion, I should like to express our support to Serbia as the incoming Chairmanship of the OSCE. The year 2015 marks the 40th anniversary of the adoption of the Helsinki Final Act. This should provide an opportunity for all participating States to develop maturity and responsibility with a view to safeguarding comprehensive security in the OSCE region and our commitment to the effectiveness of the OSCE.

Last but not least, Slovenia welcomes the willingness of Germany and Austria to take over the Chairmanship of the Organization in the years to come and offers its sincere support to their efforts to fight for our shared objectives.

Thank you for your attention.