

**Statement by Minister of Foreign Affairs of Belarus V.Makei
at the 24th Meeting of the OSCE Ministerial Council
(7 December 2017, Vienna)**

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Mr. Chairman,
Distinguished Colleagues,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

The primary objective of the Helsinki process was to defuse East-West tensions and create an atmosphere of confidence among States through dialogue and cooperation. Today, the road to this goal seems even longer than it was more than 40 years ago. The deep crisis of European security is continuing, polarization is growing, trust is eroding, and challenges are multiplying.

What should be done to stop this trend and bring about the lasting stability, and what is the role for the OSCE?

First, we need to send a strong political message that the OSCE does matter as a unique forum for inclusive security dialogue. We should fully use its potential to curb the risk of military confrontation in Europe. Belarus favours the development of a new conventional arms control regime adapted to current realities. We support the ongoing structured dialogue on current and future risks to security and stand ready to further contribute to it.

Second, resolution of conflicts – from Nagorno Karabakh to Ukraine – is the OSCE's core business. The Minsk agreements remain the cornerstone of the peaceful settlement in Ukraine and should be fully implemented by all parties. Activities of the Trilateral Contact Group regularly meeting in Minsk and of the Special Monitoring Mission in Ukraine require our unwavering support.

Third, the role of the OSCE should be strengthened in building partnerships to combat a range of complex transnational threats and challenges such as terrorism, cybercrime, human and drug trafficking or migration.

In token of our commitment Belarus plans to host a conference on preventing and countering terrorism with a focus on the cyberspace next year. And I have the honour to invite you all to tomorrow's side-event co-organized by Belarus and the OSCE Secretariat devoted to improving international co-ordination in fighting human trafficking.

Fourth, the OSCE can do more to foster connectivity by promoting economic cooperation, trade facilitation, transport links and digital agenda. We need a dialogue, not a clash of economic integration processes. The platform of our Organization is well fit for nurturing such a dialogue.

Mr. Chairman,

Speaking at the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly meeting in Minsk last July, the President of Belarus Alexander Lukashenko called for launching the "new Helsinki process" – a wide dialogue on overcoming the existing contradictions and mistrust in relations between countries in our common Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian space.

*) Corr. due to wrong indication of original language only

Belarus will continue to provide support for every constructive effort to find common ground in all three dimensions of security and to expand cooperative agenda in the OSCE. In this regard, we count on the political will of all participating States and on the contribution of the new heads of the OSCE Secretariat and Institutions appointed by consensus last July. Together we should reenergize the OSCE being guided by the spirit of joint ownership and to make the Organization up to the current challenges.

In conclusion, let me thank the Austrian Chairmanship-in-Office for its input in the work of the Organization this year and wish Italy a productive and successful OSCE Chairmanship in 2018.

Thank you.