

Statement by Ireland
Closing Session, 18th OSCE Ministerial Council
6 – 7 December 2011

(Check Against Delivery)

Madame President, Chairperson, Secretary General, Ladies and Gentlemen

As our work comes to its conclusion here today in Vilnius, Ireland would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the Lithuanian Chairmanship on its smooth organisation of the Ministerial. The Lithuanian officials have worked tremendously hard in ensuring the success of this meeting and we thank all of those involved in its preparation. The hospitality has been wonderful and we have all appreciated your warm welcome.

Ireland would like to pay particular thanks to the Chairmanship Task Force, chaired by Ambassador Paulaskas and the Vienna Team chaired by Ambassador Norkus. They have worked tirelessly to help us all progress our common goals and have been exceptionally helpful to the Irish team as it prepares for the challenging task of chairing the organisation.

Ireland welcomes all of the Ministerial Decisions which have been agreed. Having recently chaired the Forum for Security Cooperation (FSC), We are pleased with the various Decisions agreed in this area of work in the politico-military dimension and commend the work of the Kazakh Chair of the FSC in this regard. We now must work in the year ahead to achieve the targets we have set ourselves. The adoption of a revised Vienna Document for the first time since 1999 is no small achievement. Like many participating states, Ireland would have wished for more ambitious amendments but we have now created a basis for further progress and Ireland, along with the FSC chairs for 2012, will seek to build on this platform.

Ireland supports the continued progress on updating confidence and security building measures and enhancing the conflict prevention capacity of the organisation. We welcome, in particular, the substantial decision on how the OSCE deals with the conflict cycle. This decision will enable our Organisation to deepen its involvement in all phases of the conflict cycle and strengthen its capacity to tackle conflict, from prevention to resolution.

With regard to the conflicts in the OSCE area, Ireland commends the efforts by the Lithuanian Chairmanship to progress efforts in this area. We particularly wish to congratulate Lithuania on the successful resumption of the formal 5+2 talks. In addition to

supporting the existing processes, we will also draw from our experience of conflict resolution in the context of the Northern Ireland peace process, to encourage progress and facilitate engagement by all of the parties. The very good decision on the conflict cycle will greatly enhance the organisation's capacity to deal with conflicts.

Mr Chairman,

We have also agreed to two very important decisions in relation to our Partners. The decisions on Partners for Cooperation and Afghanistan are clear signals of our intention to engage fully with the partner States.

The agreement of a decision on strengthening coherence in relation to Transnational Threats will provide a very useful platform for the work of the Irish Chair in 2012.

Ireland welcomes the decisions agreed on the Economic & Environmental Dimension. Next year's theme for the Economic & Environmental Forum will concentrate on the promotion of security and stability through good governance. We look forward to working on this theme and focusing in particular on measures to counter corruption, money-laundering and terrorist financing.

We welcome, in particular, the declaration on combating trafficking in human beings.

Ireland also welcomes the positive signal given to Mongolia on its application to become a participating state and will take forward this issue as a Chair priority next year.

The decision, albeit subject to a silence procedure on the 2014 to 2015 Chairs is very welcome.

The decisions across the three dimensions have been achieved only after long and tough negotiations. We regret that important decisions were not agreed on a number of issues. In this regard, Ireland shares the concerns expressed by the EU in its statement. Ireland would have welcomed more progress in the Human Dimension, particularly on the Freedom of the Media decisions. We will build on the solid work already undertaken this year by the Lithuanian Chairmanship and hope that, on this basis, with further effort more concrete progress can be achieved next year.

Ireland will have an ambitious agenda next year across the three Dimensions, including in the Human Dimension. Freedom of expression, as exercised by our citizens through new digital

media, is an issue that will not go away. We look forward to working with you all on our priorities next year.

Looking ahead to the 1 January, Ireland is very honoured to assume the responsibility of Chair-in-Office of the OSCE. We believe that there is a great need for effective multilateralism if we are to resolve today's immense global challenges.

We look forward to working closely again with Lithuania next year and to welcoming Ukraine within the Troika format. As outgoing Chair this year, we thank Kazakhstan for their advice and assistance. We can assure you that we will continue the work which was mandated at the OSCE Summit last year in Astana on progressing the proposed Action Plan.

We have, of course, much pressing business to attend to in 2012. Ireland very much welcomes the progress made in identifying a Chair for 2014 and for 2015 and we will try to finalise this matter at the earliest opportunity.

I can assure you that Ireland will work hard to pursue the aims and principles of this organisation, an organisation to which Ireland has always attached importance.

Ireland is looking forward to this challenge and opportunity to deliver a meaningful contribution to the goal of a comprehensive peace and security.

In conclusion, Ireland would like to pay a warm tribute to the excellent Chair-in-Office, Audronius Azubalis. He has done an exceptional job this year and has set the bar very high for us next year!

We are pleased to acknowledge the Decision agreeing the date for the OSCE Ministerial next year which will take place in the city of Dublin in December 2012. We look forward to welcoming you all to Dublin.

Thank you.