

**OSCE Ministerial Meeting**

**Address by the Estonian Minister of Foreign Affairs Ms Keit Pentus-Rosimannus**

**December 4, 2014 Basel**

*Check against delivery!*

Chairman, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

- I would like to thank the Chairperson-in-Office for hosting the Ministerial Meeting here in Basel and I would like to commend your Mr Burkhalter and your dedicated team for your tireless efforts throughout this challenging year.
- Since the last Ministerial Meeting in Kyiv the security situation in Europe has seriously deteriorated. With the occupation and illegal annexation of Crimea and ongoing military interventions in Eastern Ukraine, Russia has violated international law, the underlying principles of the European security including those enshrined in the Helsinki Final Act, Paris Charter and others.
- Despite those violations, however, these principles are still valid and must be fully respected. All participating States of the OSCE have subscribed to these principles, including respect of sovereignty and territorial integrity, the inviolability of borders, non-use of force, peaceful settlement of conflicts, and the right to choose one's security arrangements. Today, we have to reaffirm our common adherence to these key commitments. This goes for all OSCE participating States with no exceptions.
- We cannot accept emergence of another protracted conflict in Europe. The existing ones in Moldova, in Georgia and the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict are still undermining the security and stability in the region.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

- Despite difficult circumstances, through free and fair presidential and parliamentary elections, the Ukrainian people have clearly chosen course of democracy and rule of law. They are seeking for structural changes and reforms. There is huge task ahead of the new Ukrainian government in this regard. We stand ready to support Ukraine throughout this process.
- As regards the OSCE, this organisation has to focus on de-escalating tensions in and around Ukraine. So far the OSCE has used effectively its toolbox of diplomacy, dialogue, mediation and monitoring. We support the excellent work of the Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine. The mission can fulfil their tasks in full capacity only if Minsk Protocol and Memorandum are implemented by all parties. In this context Russia's full cooperation is of paramount importance. OSCE Special Monitoring Mission has worked hard to carry out its tasks. We underline once again that ceasefire monitoring has to go hand in hand with the effective border monitoring. Ukraine must have effective control over its borders and therefore we all should support the expansion and extension of the OSCE Observer Mission along the Ukrainian-Russian state border.
- Speaking about wider toolbox, in current situation we must properly use measures that would increase the transparency and predictability. Unfortunately, the Vienna Document can be easily circumvented or deliberately ignored, as is shown by current conflict. Therefore it is important to modernize and assure commitments of all confidence building measures. The discussions on the modernization of the Vienna Document and the Open Sky Treaty must continue.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

- This ongoing conflict has also seriously deteriorated the human rights situation in the affected regions, in particular in the illegally annexed Crimea. We remain deeply concerned about of the situation of Crimean Tatars in Crimea. The High Commissioner for National Minorities should be able to exercise her mandate addressing these concerns.

To conclude,

- Let me underline herewith the important work of two other autonomous institutions of the OSCE – the Office Democratic Institutions and Human Rights and Representative of Freedom of the Media - in their continuous valuable contributions to the comprehensive concept of security. We must support the endeavours to ensure that human rights and fundamental freedoms are guaranteed; that all persons are treated equally; that freedom of expression is guaranteed without compromises online and offline. All participating States have to work together for the common goals.
- The Swiss chairmanship has led us through the most difficult year of OSCE's history. Serbia's path is no easier. Despite heavy disturbances in European security we have to protect the democratic values that form the core of our common future. I wish Serbia all the best in bearing the responsibility and chairing the OSCE in 2015.

Thank you for your attention.