

STATEMENT BY
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AT THE 22nd MEETING OF THE OSCE MINISTERIAL COUNCIL

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Mr. Chairperson,

Distinguished Ministers,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to join previous speakers in thanking our Serbian hosts for their warm hospitality and in congratulating First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Ivica Dacic and his able team on the excellent organization of this Ministerial Council.

Forty years since the signing of the Helsinki Final Act, its principles maintain their relevance and continue to provide for a comprehensive and inclusive framework of security and co-operation in Europe. A lot has been achieved since 1975, but still a lot remains to be done.

While some walls have been torn down, participating States are still faced with old and new security challenges that undermine the foundations on which the OSCE architecture has been built upon.

The situation today calls for common action to restore trust and confidence in a cooperative spirit and responsible way. We need to commit ourselves to a revitalizing dialogue with the aim to generate the necessary political will in response to intensifying insecurities and multidimensional crises. Our dialogue should lead to concrete solutions.

In the wake of the recent deadly terrorist attacks in Paris, it is imperative to redouble our common efforts in fighting terrorism in all its forms and manifestations with a comprehensive approach and in a coordinated manner.

In dealing with violent extremism, radicalization and the phenomenon of foreign terrorist fighters, it remains important to uphold human rights and the rule of law. We also need to foster tolerance and non-discrimination, mutual respect and understanding in our societies according to the fundamental principles and commitments of the OSCE.

To effectively combat the scourge of terrorism, we should enhance our cooperation with other relevant international and regional organizations.

Excellencies,

The crisis in and around Ukraine undermines the core values of European security. Greece strongly supports OSCE's efforts in addressing the crisis through its engagement in the Trilateral Contact Group and the Special Monitoring Mission on the ground. We urge all parties to the conflict to uphold and fully implement the Minsk agreements on the basis of respect for Ukraine's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity. Security issues should be tackled along with humanitarian needs. Continuing a nationwide dialogue is vital for peace to the benefit of the Ukrainian people.

Greece has found itself at the heart of a triangle of destabilization with Ukraine in one angle and the Middle East and Libya in the other two. In this unstable environment, my country has been striving to bolster regional security, in the face of multifaceted challenges.

For months Greece has been at the forefront of a major crisis affecting Europe - an unprecedented flow of refugees and migrants that threatens to evolve into a humanitarian disaster, if not managed in an effective and human way. Being disproportionately burdened, my country continues to do its utmost, but the situation can be addressed efficiently only through solidarity-driven actions and responsibility-sharing.

In this respect, OSCE's engagement in a coherent, comprehensive and cross-dimensional manner could offer real added value, also in close coordination with other relevant international organizations.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Greece supports the efforts in finding a comprehensive and lasting settlement to the Transdnistrian conflict, as well as in Georgia and Nagorno-Karabakh, within the agreed formats.

We remain committed and actively engaged in revitalizing conventional arms control in Europe, including through modernizing the Vienna Document, in order to restore trust, transparency and predictability in the OSCE area.

The Organization should further focus on efforts in strengthening border control, good governance and regional cooperation to address existing and emerging transnational threats, bearing in mind their cross-dimensionality.

We welcome OSCE's activities on major issues related to economic development and cooperation, anti-corruption and environment.

It goes without saying that security and democracy are inconceivable without respect of human rights and fundamental freedoms. Strong emphasis should be given to the implementation of the OSCE commitments which remains a major challenge for

all participating States. We must step up efforts to ensure freedom of expression and freedom of thought, conscience, religion or belief.

In that vein, Greece supports interfaith dialogue initiatives and stands ready to provide its good offices and mediation in finding solutions to challenges faced by cultural and religious communities. Last October we hosted in Athens an International Conference on “Religious and Cultural Pluralism and Peaceful Coexistence in the Middle East”, with the participation of various religious leaders and figures from the Christian, Jewish and Muslim world.

I would like to stress that deepening the dialogue and enhancing the cooperation with our Mediterranean and Asian Partners is essential for security in the wider OSCE region.

In closing, I extend my best wishes to the incoming German Chairmanship and assure them of our full support and cooperation.

Thank you for your attention.