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**STATEMENT BY ANGELA MERKEL,
FEDERAL CHANCELLOR OF GERMANY, AT THE
2010 OSCE SUMMIT**

Astana, 1 December 2010

Mr. President,
Ladies and gentlemen,

I should like to thank the Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev and his Government most sincerely for the hospitality and warm welcome afforded us here in Astana.

This is the first time that an OSCE meeting of Heads of Government has been held in Central Asia. It gives us all an opportunity to see the developments that have taken place in this region, of which Astana is clearly a very impressive example.

We are gathered here 35 years after the signing of the CSCE Helsinki Final Act, a process that can be said to have changed the world. The partnership from Vancouver to Vladivostok has a completely different quality today than could have been foreseen at the time. It was wished for but the great thing about this political work is that it has also come about to a large extent.

We are gathered 20 years after the meeting in Paris, where we committed ourselves to an era of democracy, peace and unity. There is no doubt that a lot has happened in these 20 years. But we must also admit that some processes are taking place more slowly than we perhaps imagined 20 years ago. Astana should therefore provide an opportunity for a critical appraisal. What have we achieved? What do we still have to do?

I therefore believe that it is important on the one hand to confirm once again the basic principles of the process. Human rights, freedom, legal security, basic democratic rights, economic growth and security are the tasks that we have to accomplish. It is also important on the other hand to state clearly in the Action Plan what is still to be done in the near future.

I believe it should honestly be said as well that we experienced a serious crisis of confidence in August 2008 during the armed conflict between Georgia and Russia. We can be very pleased that the Corfu Process enabled us to overcome this and that we can say today – be it at the NATO-Russia summit in Lisbon, in connection with Russia's co-operation with the European Union or the co-operation here in this Organization – that confidence is gradually being restored. I believe that the partnership practised in this Organization can be measured above all by the amount of mutual confidence we show.

I should like to dwell on three areas in which our work in the next few years will be of great significance.

First, the settlement of regional conflicts. Security is indivisible. The security of every single OSCE participating State is very closely tied in with the security of the other States. We must therefore manage once and for all to settle the as yet unresolved conflicts. I would therefore be pleased if we managed to make reference in the Action Plan to the conflict in Transdnistria and to formalize the 5+2 discussions.

I should like to express my thanks to the Russian President. We spoke in Germany early this summer about ways of reactivating this process. A certain amount has happened since then. If we could get to the stage of formal discussions, I think this would also provide a good basis for making progress.

Second, we are committed to the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Georgia. Efforts should therefore be continued, particularly in the Geneva talks, to strengthen security and improve the humanitarian and human rights situation. I am therefore very much in favour of the OSCE providing a visible presence again throughout Georgia.

Third, Nagorno-Karabakh. The Minsk Group must continue to make progress in the near future. Although a lot has been undertaken, I do not think we can yet be satisfied with the progress made.

Arms control is another point. I believe we should strengthen conventional arms control and confidence- and security-building measures. At the last OSCE Summit 11 years ago in Istanbul we adopted the Vienna Document 1999 of the Negotiations on Confidence- and Security-Building Measures. It continues to make a significant contribution to military transparency and predictability in Europe. The situation has obviously changed and for this reason adaptations are needed.

Although we are unlikely to achieve it at this meeting, I could also imagine us getting back to the further development of the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe and making it a reality. I believe that a really modern conventional arms control regime is possible that would take account of the present-day security requirements and considerably increase transparency.

Human rights and the social market economy are a further point. Improved implementation of our shared commitment to observe human rights and fundamental freedoms remains an important agenda item. I would like to mention the subject of free media, which we need throughout our Organization. Legal security is another abiding issue on which some work still needs to be done. The human rights guarantees enshrined in the Helsinki Final Act of freedom of demonstration, thought and the media must naturally be implemented comprehensively in all participating States. We have all seen how important it is to really promote this.

Ladies and gentlemen,
Dear colleagues,

The OSCE thus still has work to do to enable us to really become a co-operative security forum on the basis of democracy and freedom. I should like to express my heartfelt

thanks to all those who work every day for the OSCE in both country and election observation missions. The processes are frequently very laborious and contested within the countries. But every individual who works there makes a contribution to the basic principles of this Organization. Thank you for this!

I should also like to say thank you to the Partners for Co-operation, since we have shown, notably with regard to Afghanistan, that the OSCE is willing to take responsibility in central conflicts. I believe that we can also be proud of our achievements in this respect. But we should not stick our heads in the sand. There is still a lot to be done.

Thank you.