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**Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
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Chairmanship: Switzerland

**DRAFT REPORT BY THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE CONTACT GROUP WITH
THE OSCE MEDITERRANEAN PARTNERS FOR CO-OPERATION TO THE 21th
MEETING OF THE MINISTERIAL COUNCIL**

Basel Ministerial Council meeting, 4 and 5 December 2014

The 2014 Serbian Chairmanship of the Mediterranean Contact Group (MCG) worked together with Mediterranean Partners to foster an open and interactive dialogue within the Group and on following a demand-driven approach to responding to the interests and priorities of the Mediterranean Partners. Important steps have been taken by the Chair to strengthen the results-oriented co-operation between the OSCE and its Mediterranean Partners.

During the course of the year, six meetings of the Mediterranean Contact Group were held, as well as a joint meeting with the Asian Partners for Co-operation. Each meeting focused on a topic proposed by one of the Mediterranean Partners. The Serbian Chair encouraged and supported contributions from the Partners' capitals. At each meeting the relevant experts from the OSCE structures were also present in order to foster a genuine dialogue.

During the first meeting of the MCG, held on 7 March, the discussion focused on the importance of strengthening the dialogue between the Mediterranean Partners and the Participating States, in order to effectively deal with current threats and challenges in the Mediterranean region. The Serbian Chair presented the 2014 Work Plan, followed by the presentations of H.E. Dominic Schroeder (United Kingdom), H.E. Olga Algayerova (Slovakia), Chairperson of the Economic and Environmental Committee (EEC) and H.E. Rober Kvile (Norway), Chairperson of the Human Dimension Committee (HDC). The OSCE Secretary General (SG) H.E. Ambassador Lamberto Zannier presented recent developments from his recent visit to Cairo, stressed the significant contribution of Ambassador Batjargal of Mongolia to the Helsinki+40 process, noted the importance of Libya's application for partnership and introduced the new Mediterranean Focal Point "*Mediterranean Track II*" of the Secretariat.

The second meeting of the MCG, held on 28 March, featured presentations by Dr. Mohamed Chafik Sarsar, President of the High Independent Commission for Elections in Tunisia and by Dr Richard Lappin, Senior Election Advisor of ODIHR. The meeting focused on the significance of Tunisia's

new democratic constitution and the important role of ODIHR in elections observation, while pointing out the increasing involvement of the Partners for Cooperation within OSCE activities in all three dimensions, and the Helsinki+40 process.

The third meeting, on 16 May, focused on the Syrian refugee impact on Jordan with presentations by H.E. Nawaf Wasfi Tell, Ambassador at large and special advisor to the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Jordan and of Mr. Amin Awad, Director of the Bureau for the Middle East and North Africa, Regional Refugee Coordinator for the Syria Situation, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). Mr Awad spoke about the impact of refugees on the States neighbouring Syria and the role of UNHCR in responding to the refugee influx.

At its fourth meeting on 27 June, the MCG focused on combating trafficking in human beings. Ms. Merav Shmueli, Israeli National Interministerial Coordinator in Trafficking on Human Beings, presented the achievements reached in Israel in this field and discussed the remaining challenges highlighting the importance of collaboration with international bodies, NGOs and civil society as the private sector in order to achieve results.

During the fifth meeting, held on 19 September, the Swiss Chairmanship presented the results of the “*Regional workshop on kidnapping for ransom*” that took place in Valletta, Malta on the 16th and 17th September 2014 and Dr. Emiliano Alessandri, Track II Programme Officer, of the “*Helsinki+40: OSCE, the Global Mediterranean, and the Future of Cooperative Security*” Conference that took place in Rome on 18 September 2014.

The sixth meeting, held on 21 November, focused on the topics of migration and terrorism. It included presentations by H.E. Mr. Ali El Mhamdi, Ambassador of the Kingdom of Morocco, on “*Le Maroc et les questions migratoires*”, and by Mr. Karim Haggag, Deputy Head of Political Planning and Crisis Department, MFA of the Arab Republic of Egypt, on “*Combatting Terrorism*”. Both interventions cultivated a stimulating exchange on different means to address both issues and highlighted the need to tackle their root causes.

Beside these regular meetings of the MCG, the Serbian Chair took the initiative of setting up informal Med Coffee Meetings, where lively discussions took place at the level of Ambassadors and with Secretary General’s attendance, on the Mediterranean Track II initiative, Cluster 8 of the Helsinki+40 process, Libya’s application to become a Partner to the OSCE, ISIL as a security threat, preparations of the 2014 OSCE Mediterranean Conference and updates by the Swiss Chairmanship, including the new format adopted for the Basel Ministerial Council, which was held on 4-5 December 2014.

The annual joint meeting of the Mediterranean and Asian Contact Groups, held on 17 October, was focused on “*The role of women in building democracy*” with presentations by two speakers: Ms. Ajla

Van Heel, Gender Adviser (ODIHR), spoke about the role of women in Parliament and politics; Ms. Ana Lukatela, adviser on Gender Issues (OSCE Secretariat), presented two projects by the OSCE Gender Section; the first was about equality inclusion in the mediation process and the second about mentoring networks. This meeting provided the opportunity for an update on recent developments and the progress achieved by Participating States and Partners for Cooperation in promoting the active participation of women in domestic public affairs.

Consistent efforts were made by the Serbian Chair of the Mediterranean Contact Group, directed at successful preparation of the annual OSCE Mediterranean Conference, which was held in Neum, Bosnia and Herzegovina, on 27 and 28 October on: “*Enhancing co-operation to curb proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons and counter terrorism in the Mediterranean region*”. The report of the Conference has been circulated on 1 December 2014 under SEC.GAL/194/14.

The 2014 Serbian Chairmanship of the Mediterranean Contact Group expresses its sincere gratitude to all the participating States and the Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation for their commitment and co-operation in the framework of the OSCE Partnership as a platform for open dialogue and exchange of views, as well as in promotion of a results-oriented and demand-driven co-operation.