



Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

The Secretary General

Belgrade, 3 December 2015

Secretary General Lamberto Zannier

Report to the Ministerial Council

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Mr. Chairperson,

As you warmly welcome all of us here in Belgrade today, I would like to thank you for your personal commitment and active leadership of the OSCE in 2015. I would also like to thank your dedicated teams in Vienna and Belgrade, led by Ambassadors Vuk Žugić and Dejan Šahović, for their hard work and excellent co-operation with the OSCE Executive Structures throughout the year.

Ministers,

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

For almost two years now, the crisis in and around Ukraine has dominated the OSCE agenda. With the support of all of you, the Organization has played a critical role in facilitating the political process and de-escalating tensions, responding rapidly and flexibly to an unfolding crisis and adapting to the needs on the ground as the situation evolved. We proved to be an organization with real room for maneuver, trusted by all sides, ready to reach out and build bridges. But while we should all be proud of what the OSCE has accomplished, we must recognize that ultimately it is up to the sides to end the conflict and to engage in good faith in the hard work of restoring peace and stability. The OSCE can facilitate the process, but the sides need to deliver. The people on the ground, who have already suffered so much, deserve nothing less.

This has been a challenging year both politically and operationally for the OSCE. On the political side, the divide is starkly clear, with deep disagreements over the implementation of key principles, and over the consequences of their violation, but also with decreasing willingness to engage in a real dialogue on these fundamental issues.

On the operational side, we have faced many challenges on the ground. Following its speedy rollout last year, the Special Monitoring Mission quickly adapted to the rapidly evolving situation and took on new tasks under the terms of the Minsk Agreements. The Mission has grown to 651 monitors, 519 of whom are working in the East. It has integrated new technologies into its work, including unmanned aerial vehicles and satellite imagery, and has evolved into a quasi-peacekeeping operation, deploying unarmed personnel with military background in a conflict zone to monitor the withdrawal of heavy weapons. SMM monitors are also facilitating humanitarian activities to help the local population, such as repair of water and gas lines and demining. But we also continue to face obstacles: first and foremost, we need unfettered access for our monitors to all areas covered by the mandate, with no exceptions. I would like to take this opportunity to salute the personal commitment and courage of our monitors, who are doing all that they can to facilitate peace and improve conditions for people living in the conflict zone.

Yet beyond the SMM, there are many other areas where it is important for the OSCE to remain engaged, and where our Field Operations are doing useful and important work. Their mandates are tailored to support the efforts of the host countries to implement their OSCE commitments. Recently we have experienced pushback from some host countries, and this year our Office in Baku was abruptly shut down. Over time the needs of host countries evolve, and I will continue to engage with their governments to ensure that OSCE Field Operations are providing added value. But I would also argue that we need to think more creatively about possible new models for OSCE Field Operations, while not losing sight of the core mandate of our Organization.

The crisis in and around Ukraine has been a game-changer for the OSCE in more ways than one. In terms of resources, the crisis has had a significant impact on our financial requirements. The SMM has its own budget, but like all of our Field Operations, it is not self-sufficient. Field Operations depend heavily on the central structures of the Organization for

operational, administrative, legal, security and communications support, as well as for reporting and political advice. They require continuous, resource-intensive support to be able to deliver effectively. And even when Field Operations close down, as happened in Georgia and Belarus a number of years back, the other Executive Structures continue to provide significant support for follow-up activities as well as new projects in the former host countries.

At the Chairmanship's informal ministerial event on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly, a number of you emphasized that the OSCE merits stronger support in terms of financial and human resources to ensure that the Organization can contribute even more effectively to strengthening security and stability in our region. Especially now, when the crisis in and around Ukraine continues to dominate our agenda and other critical threats and challenges face our region, we need your support to ensure that the 2016 Unified Budget is approved on time, before the end of December.

In this context, I would also like to mention a key structural constraint we face: the Organization's lack of legal personality. We owe it to our staff to provide adequate duty of care and to ensure that they have privileges and immunities to protect them. In an effort to address this issue, I have begun seeking bilateral standing arrangements with participating States. Until the participating States can reach consensus on the Organization's legal status, this seems to be a reasonable alternative.

Dear Ministers,

Over the past year challenges on the global agenda have also come to the fore in our region, with an impact on stability. Terrorism has become an everyday concern for citizens throughout the OSCE area. Attacks are becoming increasingly frequent, and I would like to offer my solidarity to the people of all countries affected. The Organization has been stepping up its efforts to prevent terrorism, including by increasing our attention to countering radicalization and violent extremism that can lead to terrorism. This year, we launched a campaign with the slogan "OSCE United in Countering Violent Extremism" to highlight our work and to show that all of us – the Secretariat, Institutions and Field Operations – are doing our part to help prevent terrorism. To date, over 3.5 million people have shown their support for our campaign on social media. One of the things we have learned about countering violent

extremism is that we need to look at problems within our societies. We not only need to create effective counter-narratives that encourage vulnerable individuals to reject terrorism, but we must also step up our efforts to promote tolerance and non-discrimination. And this is also important because many of our participating States are dealing with unprecedented waves of refugees and migrants entering Europe. The sheer magnitude of this influx is putting tremendous pressure on national and regional efforts to manage the flow, straining relations between some neighbors within our region, and feeding xenophobia. The OSCE has so far taken a three-pronged approach to the challenge, by addressing root causes such as conflict, poverty and climate change; tackling related challenges like human trafficking and organized crime; and promoting tolerance and non-discrimination to help ensure that our societies are inclusive. But we need a more coherent and co-ordinated approach, also to ensure synergies with the work of other organizations.

In a few days we will know the outcome of COP21, which may well be the international community's last chance to take effective action to stop climate change. Six weeks ago I held a Security Days event to stimulate constructive debate on how the OSCE could step up its efforts to address security challenges stemming from climate change. And in September, I participated in the Sustainable Development Summit, where I highlighted some of the key ways the OSCE's work supports many of the newly agreed Sustainable Development Goals. I would welcome your consensus on a declaration supporting the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda.

Dear Ministers,

Many issues on the OSCE agenda require broad partnerships. This year we have enhanced our engagement with our Mediterranean and Asian Partners for Co-operation, with whom we increasingly share common concerns. Our partnerships with other organizations are also important, above all our relationship with the United Nations. Together we are looking at ways to increase operational synergies between our organizations.

Especially when tensions and mistrust are high, Track II initiatives play an important role in fostering constructive discussion on critical issues. OSCE Security Days bring voices from civil society, academia, religious communities, media and youth into our debate. And

the OSCE Academic Network and the New-Med Network continue to provide useful analysis and recommendations on key topics on our agenda.

I remain committed to continued close co-ordination with our OSCE Institutions, including the Parliamentary Assembly. In this connection, I would like to thank Secretary General Spencer Oliver, who leaves a strong legacy after many years of service, and to congratulate his successor, Mr. Roberto Montella, who takes office next year.

In closing, I would like to take a moment to thank the OSCE staff. I am proud to work with such dedicated and hard-working people. Their tireless efforts in support of OSCE goals inspire me every day.

Next year our region will continue to face enormous challenges. I look forward to working with the incoming German Chairmanship to address them. You can continue to count on the commitment of our staff, as well as my own personal commitment, in assisting the participating States in implementing your decisions and supporting your efforts to strengthen security for individuals, families and communities throughout the OSCE region and beyond.

Thank you.