

OSCE – 20th MINISTERIAL COUNCIL

Delegation of the Republic of Cyprus

**Statement by the Head of Delegation H.E. Mr Costas A. Papademas
Permanent Representative to the OSCE**

Kiev, 6 December 2013

**Mr Chairman,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Allow me at the outset to begin, by thanking our hosts for their warm and generous hospitality and for the excellent and efficient organization of this 20th Ministerial Council. In this regard, we would like as well, to express our gratitude to Ukraine for its unwavering effort to produce results and the inspiring way in which it has steered the work of the Organization for the last twelve months.

Please allow me also to extend our appreciation to the Secretary General Lamberto Zannier for his wise leadership and the extraordinary work carried out in furthering the Organizations objectives, endeavours and vision.

Mr Chairman,

Cyprus fully subscribes to the statement delivered earlier on behalf of the European Union, however we wish to take this opportunity to add few words in our national capacity.

First and foremost Cyprus reiterates its commitment to the norms and principles of the OSCE which are in line or even compliment the norms and principles enshrined in the UN Charter and in other International Instruments and Accords relevant to the work of this Organization.

As we approach the 40th anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act we become more and more aware of the inextricable link that exists between the security of states and the security of citizens. The rule of Law, Democracy and Human Rights must continue to be at the heart of the OSCE's comprehensive approach to security. Our adherence and recommitment through the Astana Commemorative Declaration to a free, democratic and indivisible Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian Security Community constitute the basis for furthering efforts in order to realize our vision for an OSCE area free of dividing lines, conflicts and security considerations. In this regard Helsinki +40 process is an additional tool available to participating states in order to offer a strong and comprehensive support, widening their impact towards realizing our vision for a security community. We recall our determination to use this process in order to produce practical results, in implementing OSCE commitments and to build upon OSCE achievements across all three dimensions. We equally support civil society's input in this regard.

We continue to view OSCE, as an important forum where diverging views and differences can be aired and debated with the aim of finding a common basis to move forward. The modus operandi of this consensus – basis Organization is a unique process giving the opportunity to every and each participating state to interact, hopefully in a vigilant way, in order to achieve acceptable and balanced approaches on important issues.

Mr Chairman,

My country attaches a great importance to all aspects tasked by the Human Dimension and the work done and especially the valuable contribution of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, in monitoring elections, addressing shortages and evaluating processes and institutions in areas where needed. Selective implementation of Human Rights, including those set as priorities for the OSCE, that is freedom of expression, safety of journalists, freedom of assembly and association, is not permissible. As a country who suffered a massive violation of the most fundamental Human Rights of its citizens, and that is by external interference, we believe that firm and unified application of Human Rights cannot and should not be compromised under any circumstances. In this regard interaction with the Council of Europe and its Human Rights Instruments and findings could constitute a good point of reference.

Mr Chairman,

Taking into account the volatile situation across the Mediterranean and the dire consequences of a political and economic crisis, resulting to a social upheaval and uncertainty, a further engagement with the Mediterranean Partners is more than necessary, in order to provide appropriate assistance and encouragement to those countries, during this difficult period of transition. It is superfluous to mention that a strong will was expressed by the Mediterranean Partners during the Med Conference in Monaco. In this regard we welcome Libya's application to be engaged in this process. Security interdependence between OSCE region and the Mediterranean is evident. Cyprus as a Mediterranean country fully supports a strong and meaningful cooperation with the Mediterranean Countries in all three dimensions. New states interested on the OSCE could only reinforce relevance of our Organization and help us to better address threats emanating from outside the OSCE region.

Mr Chairman,

In our today's turbulent times, OSCE faces diverse and complex security challenges. A cluster of threats are posed by non state actors. Terrorist activities, organised crime and illegal immigration, are a by-product of a range of factors such as instability, poverty and suppression and should be addressed as well. Ensuring security across the OSCE region requires further efforts to tackle transnational threats, by developing the Organization's capacity, to prevent and resolve conflicts and to continue promoting confidence and security building measures as well as to renew our efforts towards conventional arms control. Our commitments in the OSCE's politico-military dimension remain an important stabilising factor in the OSCE area.

Mr Chairman,

We all know that International Organizations are structures and processes consisting of member states (in our case participating states) and can produce results and pursue policies subject to the will of those member states. So the best processes and structures can produce very poor or no results and very poor or weak structures can produce the best results. In the end is the political will that matters.

Mr Chairman, Excellencies

We aspire that we will be able to celebrate the 40th Anniversary of the signing of the Helsinki Final Act with visible progress and tangible results. The decision is on us and on every one of us.

In concluding, we would like to welcome the incoming Chair of Switzerland (and Serbia which will follow in the Chair on 2015) and their commitment, to work jointly in furthering the scope of this Organization, in order make the 40th anniversary as a milestone for the OSCE. We wish them every success.

Finally Mr Chairman, allow me, to express our wish for a successful outcome of this Ministerial Council and to congratulate you once again for your Chairmanship.

Thank you Mr Chairman