

**STATEMENT BY MR. HARLEM DÉSIR,
MINISTER OF STATE FOR EUROPEAN AFFAIRS OF FRANCE,
AT THE TWENTY-SECOND MEETING OF THE
OSCE MINISTERIAL COUNCIL**

Belgrade, 3 and 4 December 2015

Mr. Chairperson,
Secretary General,
President of the Parliamentary Assembly,
Ministers,
Dear colleagues,

I should like first of all to express my condolences to John Kerry, to the American people and to the families of those who lost their lives in San Bernardino, California.

I also thank each of you for the expressions of solidarity following the attacks in Paris on 13 November.

Our meeting today is particularly important, in this year that marks the 40th anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act. However, it occurs at a time marked by an undermining of confidence and security in Europe, which should serve as a powerful reminder of our commitment to the founding principles of the OSCE. Nothing can justify the use of armed aggression, the changing of borders by force and the annexation of part of the territory of a sovereign State. Only dialogue, co-operation and respect for international law will enable us to regain the trust and understanding necessary to ensure lasting security and co-operation on our continent.

It is in this spirit that France is working towards a settlement of the crisis in Ukraine, which will be possible only through full implementation of the Minsk agreements. The last Summit of the Heads of State or Government in the Normandy format on 2 October in Paris resulted in an agreement on a road map on the political part of these agreements. This should lead to the organization of local elections in the Donetsk and Luhansk regions in accordance with Ukrainian legislation and the relevant OSCE standards and monitored by the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, followed by the entry into force of a special status for these territories. However, the political part of the settlement of the crisis can progress only if the security conditions are met on the ground. Strict observance of the ceasefire is indispensable. The role of the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine is therefore essential, especially in the context of the new verification tasks and assistance in mine clearance, as provided for by its mandate.

Beyond the crisis in Ukraine, we must also intensify our efforts to resolve the other protracted conflicts in the OSCE area.

France remains fully committed, alongside the United States and Russia, to the search for a lasting peaceful solution to Nagorno-Karabakh.

It calls for the immediate implementation and financing by the OSCE participating States of the project by the International Committee of the Red Cross to find people who went missing during the conflict, and will also continue to support the territorial integrity of Georgia and Moldova within their internationally recognized borders.

Mr. Chairperson,
Dear colleagues,

On 13 November, France was targeted by the barbarity of Daesh – the same cowardly and indiscriminate violence that has struck Copenhagen, Brussels, Ankara, a Russian airplane in Egypt, Tunis and Beirut. This fanatical terrorism that perverts religion had already killed in Madrid, London and New York. We know that only our unity will enable us to deal with a scourge that threatens us all, because through the persons targeted and murdered in this cowardly way, it is also our values that have been attacked, what we stand for: open, tolerant, democratic societies based on the rule of law and human rights. In a word, what we are.

It is for this reason that we must condemn without distinction all forms of discrimination, ideology, racism and anti-Semitism. Our unity is vital in this struggle.

In order to eradicate Daesh, we need more than ever to present a firm and united response. This is the aim of United Nations Security Council resolution 2249 proposed by France and adopted unanimously by the Member States of the United Nations. We are at war with Daesh and its barbarity. We shall continue to work with all our partners to co-ordinate all the efforts needed on the ground to destroy Daesh and to ensure a political transition within the framework of the Vienna process in order to achieve a ceasefire and to provide for the departure of Bashar al-Assad, because this is the condition for lasting peace.

The OSCE can contribute to this, and I applaud the concrete and operational initiatives that have been undertaken within it, whether to support the implementation of the recently adopted United Nations Security Council resolution 2249 or to strengthen our collective commitments in the fight against radicalization and violent extremism. The increased co-operation with our Mediterranean Partners in this area is a crucial dimension that I also wish to pay tribute to. At a time when the terrorists are seeking to divide our societies by exploiting religion, the international community must more than ever remain united and recall the universal principles of human rights. We must not make a distinction between discrimination and manifestations of intolerance according to religion because all forms are to be deplored. It is our shared responsibility to ease tensions between believers, non-believers, Muslims, Christians, Jews and other faiths, firmly recalling the universality of human rights, condemning systematically and without any hierarchy all forms of discrimination and intolerance against people on the basis of their religion or belief, and rejecting any amalgamation or connection of terrorism with other factors.

The OSCE can also play a role in helping our countries to meet the challenge posed by the unprecedented influx of migrants and refugees caused, among other things, by the

continuation of the Syrian conflict and the humanitarian tragedy that it represents. The OSCE principles offer important points of reference for responding to this complex situation, which affects both fundamental rights and security. For that reason, we believe that the OSCE's approach of co-operative security also provides a unique framework for promoting better co-operation by the police and the judicial authorities between the countries of origin, transit and destination to prevent traffickers and smugglers preying with impunity on migrants and refugees. Once again, dialogue with our Mediterranean Partners is crucial, as it is among all the participating States of the Organization.

The OSCE has established itself as a key player in meeting the main challenges facing Europe today. As a unique forum for co-operation and dialogue in Europe, it plays a major role in promoting the rule of law and respect for fundamental freedoms, without which there can be no stability. It has also demonstrated its usefulness on the ground in Ukraine through its mediation capacity, its role in the Trilateral Contact Group and its Observer Mission on the border with Russia. Its politico-military instruments are crucial for fostering security and reducing tensions, but they must be adapted to the new reality of the threats to security in Europe. This is why the revision of the Vienna Document should be completed in 2016.

The time has also come to provide the OSCE with a durable financing mechanism with a single scale based on the economic and budgetary realities and on the capacity of the participating States to contribute.

To conclude, I should like to congratulate Serbia on its outstanding Chairmanship during a particularly demanding year and to assure the incoming German Chairmanship of France's full support in contributing to security and co-operation in Europe.

Thank you.