



REPUBLIC OF ALBANIA
MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Statement

by **H.E. Mr. Ditmir Bushati**

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Mr. Chairperson-in-Office,
Mr. Secretary General,
Colleagues,

For some time now, when we meet in December we speak of the difficult year we are leaving behind. 2015 has revealed itself to be an extremely difficult year. It started and is ending with bloody acts of terror, which are affecting the OSCE area.

The situation in and around Ukraine remains concerning, while full compliance with the Minsk Agreements, by all the parties, is the only way towards a political settlement.

The arch of instability, with Syria at its epicenter, has produced a dramatic humanitarian crisis, a refugee crisis of unprecedented magnitude, and a security crisis for the entire OSCE area.

Throughout the year, we have witnessed the rampaging violence of DAESH, and with each passing day we become more convinced that that kind of barbarism will not just go away.

40 years after the Helsinki Final Act, the need to bolster the foundations of our Organization is stronger than ever. I would like to thank the Panel of Eminent Persons for its work and recommendations on how to re-consolidate European Security as a Common Project.

I believe they have provided the Organization with a blueprint of how to

address the current security conundrum in Europe, without losing sight of the principles on which the OSCE is built, and with enough room for the incoming German Chairmanship to guide the process of bringing our Organization up to par.

I would urge us to look not only at the threats and challenges, but also at the opportunities this security shake-up presents.

The crisis in and around Ukraine was an opportunity for the OSCE to reaffirm its ability to function under the most difficult of circumstances.

Albania recognizes the efforts and fully supports the Special Monitoring Mission in Ukraine, the Trilateral Contact Group and the Normandy format of talks.

Today's challenging security environment represents an opportunity for the OSCE to prove that it has the structures and the instruments to restore confidence and facilitate dialogue between states, as well as with international organizations.

Albania believes it is essential to actively engage in strengthening the OSCE in the areas where it has a distinct added value, in a spirit of cooperation, inclusiveness and complementarity with other organizations, like NATO and the EU.

This is particularly so with regard to confidence and security building measures, arms control, drug trafficking, terrorism and radicalization that leads to terrorism, and migration.

We believe that updating the Vienna Document is a priority for building the trust and confidence that is required for a Europe whole, free and at peace.

At the same time, the OSCE's independent Institutions deserve not only our appreciation, but also our full support, political and budgetary, as they carry out their conflict prevention and early warning functions.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Regional cooperation in the Western Balkans was one of the priorities of the outgoing Serbian Chairmanship, which Albania welcomed, not least because it coincides with our foreign policy priorities.

The Western Balkans have made progress this year in the framework of the "Berlin Process", which has been pivotal for beefing up regional cooperation.

However, there is a marked dichotomy in our region, between the language of our discourse, which is that of the EU and of the European

values, and on the other hand, the actions, which fall short of materializing this language. Making regional cooperation genuine and tangible requires translating words to deeds.

Staying in the Western Balkans, let me once more impress upon the importance of Kosovo's participation in regional and international organizations, including the OSCE, where Kosovo should have its own seat among us in this Council.

I reiterate this, because Kosovo is neither a Pandora's box, nor an annexed territory, and even less a frozen conflict. Kosovo is an undeniable reality, and calling it anything else is not in the spirit of the founding principles of this Organization.

I would like to thank the Serbian Chairmanship for its work during this past year and its hospitality at this Ministerial meeting. I wish every success to the incoming German Chairmanship, confident of their resolve to steer the OSCE in the right direction in dealing with the challenges that the European security architecture faces.

Thank you.