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## **DELEGATION OF MALTA**

**STATEMENT DELIVERED BY H.E. DR. COLIN SCICLUNA,  
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE TO THE OSCE**

**ON BEHALF OF**

**THE HON. DR. FRANCIS ZAMMIT DIMECH,  
MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF MALTA**

**DUBLIN, 7 DECEMBER 2012**



Mr. Chairman  
Excellencies  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

First of all, I wish to align myself with the statement delivered earlier on behalf of the European Union and wish to add a few words in a national capacity.

Allow me to begin by thanking our hosts for their warm and generous hospitality in organising this 19<sup>th</sup> Ministerial Council in such an efficient manner. We also take this opportunity to express gratitude to Ireland for the inspiring manner in which it has steered the work of this Organisation over the past 12 months and its unwavering commitment to strengthening the OSCE.

Moreover, Malta welcomes the recent decision on Mongolia's accession and is convinced that Mongolia's membership will further strengthen the Organisation in the achievement of its core values and principles.

Please also permit me to extend my gratitude to our Secretary-General Lamberto Zannier, whose leadership has been such an asset to this Organisation. We thank him and his dedicated staff in the Secretariat for the extraordinary work being carried out.

My best wishes also go to the incoming Chairmanship whom I wish every success. I can assure them of the continuing support of my delegation in bringing forward the aims of the OSCE.

Mr. Chairman,

Malta continues to view the OSCE as a crucial forum that provides a venue for dialogue as well as the means for action. The Organisation remains a formidable political achievement spanning a diversity of cultures and peoples.

As a vibrant, living organisation, it is also normal that the OSCE should face an important test with regard its identity and objectives. The debate on where the Organisation is heading is both pertinent and necessary. Although the solutions may not always be immediately available, Malta believes that the consensual approach practiced by the OSCE is an inclusive model that deserves credit. Nevertheless, we should be vigilant to avoid having the principle of consensus being flipped over to become a right of veto.



Mr Chairman,

The promotion of and respect for the rule of law, democracy and human rights must continue to be at the heart of the OSCE's comprehensive approach to security. Regretfully, we note that human rights continue to be curtailed on presumed security grounds within the OSCE area. The presumption that human rights violations may be permissible under certain circumstances is mistaken and needs to be forcefully challenged. Malta strongly believes that human integrity and dignity cannot and should not be compromised under any circumstances.

Malta has consistently attached considerable importance to the work done with respect to the Human Dimension and commends the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights for its vital contributions. In acknowledging the profound changes that have taken place in our immediate neighbourhood, Malta believes that ODIHR is in a unique position to support Mediterranean partners in this transformational phase. We must continue to offer support and encouragement towards these countries for them to implement their stated goal of improving the respect for human rights. The OSCE has consistently provided assistance and guidance to efforts to achieve and uphold these noble values. Our collective efforts in this regard underscore the firm view that the protection of human rights and effective security are mutually reinforcing goals.

As we continue to bear witness to the human tragedy taking place in Syria, it is worth bearing this in mind. This is no distant conflict; it is taking place on the very borders of the OSCE space and its impact is being felt directly in a number of participating and partner States of the OSCE.

Mr Chairman,

The events we are witnessing across the Mediterranean are not only historic but arguably also overdue, for while oppression can stifle opinion and freedom of expression, it does so only temporarily. The human spirit cannot be oppressed and the struggles for freedom that we continue to witness bear testimony to this. Of course change is not simply a U-turn. The countries facing transition also face considerable on-going risks and uncertainty. However these can never be the reason for the suppression of freedom and the dignity which grows alongside it.



Mr. Chairman,

Malta cannot but recall the 5+5 Summit, which it hosted on 5 October 2012. In these turbulent times of economic and political difficulties, the leaders of this forum recognised the importance of engaging in a spirit of collaboration and partnership. With the backdrop of the profound changes taking place in the Mediterranean, the Malta Declaration underscored the democratic developments of the region and focussed attention on the measures required to maintain a sustainable momentum. Malta is proud to have hosted this meeting and to yet again, act as a channel for peace and dialogue.

Mr. Chairman,

The OSCE region today faces an increasingly diverse and complex range of security challenges. This includes the dangers posed by non-State actors, who draw strength from weak economies and environmental degradation. This has led to an array of factors that threaten stability on the very doorstep of the OSCE, with an increase in terrorist activity and organised crime.

Illegal migration is a by-product of this situation and a challenge that Malta knows only too well. This issue stems from a combination of factors that include poverty, instability, crime and corruption. Malta has always viewed this as a human tragedy and has sought to give refuge to the desperate and the destitute and it does so in a spirit of solidarity, in the belief that every human being deserves unquestioned dignity. Yet, this issue cannot be allowed to become a mere news headline; another all-too-often tragic statistic. Malta strongly urges the international community and the OSCE in particular to develop mechanisms that address not only the phenomenon itself but, more crucially, its causes. We strongly believe that this issue crosses the wide range of the Organisation's activities linking the threats to security with the respect for human rights.

Mr. Chairman,

There is a growing concern about the very real potential risks posed by information and communications technology in conflict situations. The spread of the World Wide Web has had a positive impact on economic and social development, but increasingly it is also seen as an instrument for political and military activities. International cyber conflict has the potential to cause widespread strategic instability, including because it remains so difficult to identify and trace those responsible for attacks of this nature. Enhanced transparency, confidence and predictability in cyberspace therefore form the central basis on which future progress will be made. In this regard Malta would like to see the swift development of viable confidence and security-building measures for cyberspace within



the framework of the OSCE. In this respect we affirm that we are among those who have supported the initiative to adopt a position at this Ministerial Council on Fundamental Freedoms in the Digital Age. We believe that this is a timely and necessary initiative to which the vast majority of participating states have lent their support.

Mr. Chairman,

Malta believes that the OSCE can bring positive change and be results-oriented. Even as circumstances may force us to deal with unexpected challenges, the OSCE has to be re-energized to confront them. There are several areas in which we can make headway and Malta is convinced that this gathering can contribute to the effectiveness of the Organisation. Indeed the challenges and conflicts that continue to exist in our midst must be the absolute priority for the coming years, including in our preparations for the milestone of 40 years since the Helsinki Final Act. Over these two days, we have heard reiterations of commitment and vision for the future of our organisation. It is hoped that these will be translated into an OSCE that can show that it means business and that is truly on the side of effective and lasting action.

I thank you for your attention.