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MINISTERIAL DECLARATION ON THE SIXTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF THE END OF WORLD WAR II

The year 2005 marks the sixtieth anniversary of the end of the battles of World War II. We mourn the tens of millions of people who lost their lives, as victims of the war, the Holocaust, occupations and acts of repression. We honour all those who fought for the victory of humanity against dictatorship, oppression and aggression. Time will not diminish the meaning of their sacrifice. We welcome the UN General Assembly resolution on the commemoration of the sixtieth anniversary of the end of World War II.

Reflecting on our desire to prevent the recurrence of such a European and international catastrophe, we hail the progress that has been made in the past sixty years in overcoming the tragic legacy of World War II, towards achieving global peace and security, reconciliation, international and regional co-operation and the promotion of democratic values, human rights and fundamental freedoms, in particular through the United Nations and the establishment of regional organizations. We stress the important role that the CSCE and OSCE have played in this regard in the past three decades.

Recalling the Helsinki Final Act, the Charter of Paris for a New Europe, the Charter for European Security, and other agreed OSCE documents we shall spare no effort to avoid the emergence of new dividing lines in the OSCE area, and to eliminate sources of hostility, tensions and confrontation. We are determined to continue our collective efforts with a view of creating a common and indivisible space of security in the OSCE area, based on democracy, the rule of law, economic prosperity, social justice, and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the rights of persons belonging to national minorities.

We have learned from history the danger of intolerance, discrimination, extremism and hatred on ethnic, racial and religious grounds. We are committed to combat these threats, including through the OSCE, and we reject any attempts to justify them.

We strongly condemn any denial of the Holocaust. We condemn all forms of ethnic cleansing. We confirm our adherence to the UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide adopted on 9 December 1948. We call on the participating States to take every possible action to ensure that attempts to commit genocide are prevented today and in the future. The perpetrators of such crimes should be brought to justice.

New times have brought new threats and challenges, one of the most dangerous of which is terrorism. We will fight this threat together, by uniting our efforts and resources, and defending common principles. We will work, *inter alia*, through the OSCE, to combat terrorism and other threats and challenges to security.

We are convinced that the peaceful resolution of all existing conflicts, the observance of the norms of international law, the aims and principles of the UN Charter, the fulfilment of commitments contained in the Helsinki Final Act and other agreed OSCE documents are the best way to pay tribute to those who struggled for peace, freedom, democracy and human dignity, to commemorate all victims of World War II, to overcome the past, and to save present and future generations from the scourge of war and violence.