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**STATEMENT BY MR. THIERRY REPENTIN,
MINISTER FOR EUROPEAN AFFAIRS OF FRANCE,
AT THE TWENTIETH MEETING OF THE
OSCE MINISTERIAL COUNCIL**

Kyiv, 5 and 6 December 2013

Mr. Chairperson,
Mr. Secretary General,
Ladies and gentlemen,

The OSCE needs to have a very ambitious vision with regard to global security.

The three dimensions defined in the Helsinki Final Act – politico-military security, economic and environmental security, and human security and human rights, which are more important than ever in the current context – create a foundation of shared values.

They are the point of reference that our States established in 1975 at a time when the European continent was still divided. They are the legacy that we must uphold today. They should continue to guide and inspire our peoples so that they can freely determine their destiny and the conditions for their economic and democratic development.

We have good reason today to be confident in the OSCE's future. But we also have a duty in the years to come to address more difficult questions that sometimes divide us – in particular the conventional arms control regime in Europe, which is currently in a critical state.

The Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe, a major instrument of the post-Cold War period, has been suspended between Russia and NATO. There has been no progress for 20 years in the resolution of the so-called “protracted” conflicts in the former Soviet space. Fundamental freedoms are not respected as they should be.

We need to continue our commitment and find shared solutions to breathe life into the three fundamental dimensions of our commitment that I have just cited, whatever the context.

It is for that reason that we embarked upon the Helsinki+40 process designed to adapt our Organization to the new challenges to European security as we approach the 40th anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act.

France will continue to fully support this process in order to achieve four aims:

The first aim is to achieve greater transparency and control of arms. We support the modernization of the Vienna Document and formulated suggestions in that regard in 2010 that are still under discussion. We are also willing to consider the relaunching of the discussion on transparency and conventional arms control in Europe, an area in which the OSCE plays a historical and unique role.

The second aim is to strengthen the OSCE's role in resolving the major international challenges. The OSCE works in concert with the European Union and the main actors involved to move towards the settlement of conflicts. I should like to reaffirm our support for the work of the three Co-Chairmen of the Minsk Group, the "5+2" negotiations on Transdnistria, and the Geneva Discussions inaugurated after the war in Georgia.

I should also like to draw attention to the OSCE field missions. The OSCE has recently played a useful role in the organization of municipal elections in northern Kosovo.

I also note the value of the OSCE's partnerships with the Mediterranean region and with Asia. We hope to be able to adopt a declaration on Afghanistan that will enable the OSCE to contribute to stabilizing the country, to assist in the successful holding of elections in 2014 and to better control the borders. We regret, however, that it has not been possible this year to grant Libya the status of Partner.

The third aim is to reaffirm the role of our Organization in the new security issues connected with the continuing process of globalization. We welcome the agreement on cybersecurity, which confirms the Organization's pioneering role in this area, and we hope that the decision will be adopted in the economic dimension on improving the environmental footprint of energy-related activities. It would represent a further step in our climate and development diplomacy, especially useful in the run-up to the climate conference to be held in Paris in 2015.

The fourth aim, which is more topical and relevant than ever, is to continue in the protection of human rights. In that regard I associate myself with the words expressed earlier by the representative of the European Union, Ms. Schmid.

The underlying idea behind the Helsinki Final Act was that security and human rights, far from being conflicting, were complementary and that it was possible to achieve both greater security and greater respect for human rights. In that context, we have had occasion to express our concern, notably in the light of the recent peaceful demonstrations in Ukraine, regarding freedom of expression and assembly and the protection of journalists. Regarding the situation in this country, we take note of the statement yesterday by the Ukrainian Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Kozhara, calling for calm discussion between the authorities and the demonstrators and for respect for the freedom to demonstrate and freedom of the press, but we shall continue to monitor the application of these fundamental principles that we cannot compromise on.

In that context, we hope that this Ministerial Council will succeed in adopting the four decisions proposed by the Ukrainian Chairmanship in the human dimension, including the protection of journalists. More generally, France believes that the strengthening of the human dimension and the independent institutions such as the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights and the Representative on Freedom of the Media should also be an integral component of the Helsinki+40 process.

Mr. Chairperson,

As you know, France seeks to preserve and consolidate our *acquis* and to modernize and strengthen this Organization. We have a duty to be ambitious in the Helsinki+40 process so as to enable our States and peoples to benefit from greater collective security and respect for our fundamental values. We look forward with particular interest to the contribution by the academic world and civil society to this process. The forthcoming Swiss and Serbian Chairmanships of this Organization can count on our support.

Thank you for your attention.