

Statement by H.E. Mr. **Evaldas Ignatavičius**
Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Lithuania
OSCE Ministerial Council
Dublin, 6 December 2012

Mr. Chairman,
Excellencies, Distinguished delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

First of all I would like to congratulate the Irish OSCE Chairmanship on the effective leadership in our Organization throughout the year and to thank our Irish hosts for the generous hospitality extended to us all here in Dublin.

My country held the Chair of the OSCE last year. We appreciate very much that across all dimensions of security the Irish Chairmanship efficiently took over where we had left on issues of Protracted Conflicts and related negotiation formats, Conflict Cycle, Transnational Threats, Partnerships, Freedom of Digital Media, Safety of Journalists, Review of Human Dimension Events, Mongolia's Application to become a Participating State, Legal Status of the OSCE, and others. It attests to their continued relevance and validity to our Organization.

I trust that our meeting these days will result in a realistic, pragmatic and compact package of substance-driven decisions and declarations at this Ministerial Council, in all three OSCE dimensions of security, as well as on cross-dimensional matters.

While negotiating Dublin deliverables, we should remain aware of the broader picture and real meaning of our efforts. Two years ago in Astana our Heads of State and Government tasked us to finish the business that had not been accomplished at their Summit and pointed out concrete areas of work. They identified challenges that remained to be properly addressed. The 2011 Lithuanian Chairmanship did its best in trying to implement this overarching Astana tasking by applying the approach of *small but meaningful steps*. The Irish Chairmanship moved this effort forward diligently with its elegant *building blocks* programme. We fully support the Helsinki+40 process initiated by Ireland as a tool to consistently pursue the implementation of the Astana mandate, not least by enhancing continuity within the Organization from one Chairmanship to the other and by establishing strong elements of multi-annual political and budgetary planning.

In its capacity as an OSCE Troika member, Lithuania chairs the OSCE Contact Group with Asian Partners for Co-operation this year. In this work, we have mainly focused on setting in motion the implementation of the three decisions of the Vilnius Ministerial Council regarding OSCE partnerships: "*On Partners for Co-operation*", "*On the Application of Mongolia to Become a Participating State*" and "*On Strengthening the OSCE Engagement with Afghanistan*".

Therefore, I cannot miss this opportunity to congratulate our former Asian Partner for Co-operation Mongolia on becoming, last month, the 57th participating State of the OSCE. In the 2011 Vilnius MC Decision on Mongolia's Application, the OSCE made a clear promise. Now, that promise has been fulfilled. It is a proof that our Organization continues to be relevant and credible.

I would also like to emphasize here the importance of the new comprehensive package of support projects addressed to Afghanistan that we have launched this year. Together with the Irish Chairmanship and in close consultation with our Partner for Co-operation Afghanistan we prioritized nine out of the 32 project proposals and gathered sufficient support among the participating States to start the implementation of three of them this year. Under one of those projects, the Lithuanian Border Guard Academy recently hosted border security and customs officials from Afghanistan and

most of the Central Asian participating States for a training visit, which focused on promoting regional co-operation among their respective authorities in charge of various aspects of border security.

The implementation of the remaining support projects and further enhancement of the OSCE engagement with Afghanistan are becoming all the more vital as the 2014 withdrawal of the International Security Assistance Forces and final transfer of responsibility to Afghan national authorities approach. Helping Afghanistan become a stable and secure country is the only way to effectively respond to transnational threats coming from its territory, including terrorism and drugs, that affect us all. Therefore, also in the years to come, we will support the enhancement of the OSCE mandate and capabilities to help stabilize and modernize the Afghan government and society.

As my country is about to complete its work as a member of the OSCE Troika, we will face new diplomatic challenges next year. Lithuania will take over the Chair of the OSCE Forum for Security Co-operation during the period of April to July and will succeed Ireland as rotating Presidency of the EU Council in the second half of next year. We look forward to serving the OSCE community also in those important capacities.

In conclusion, I would like to wish success to the incoming Ukrainian, Swiss, and Serbian OSCE Chairmanships.