

Statement by Poland

ENGLISH only

21th Meeting of the OSCE Ministerial Council
(Basel, 4 December 2014)

Mr. Chairman,

I would like, first and foremost, to thank the Swiss Chairmanship for steering the OSCE in the last twelve months. I am sure that many around this table agree that in such a difficult year for the European security system, we could not have wished for a better leader. The leader, who has been able to meet the challenge, and despite dramatic developments, mobilise political support of the whole OSCE community for taking important actions.

Undoubtedly, 2014 will be remembered as the year, when our hopes for undivided, safe and secure Europe, sparked by the end of the cold war, were given a hard blow. The year marked with broken principles of the Helsinki Decalogue and violation of sovereignty and territorial integrity of one of the OSCE participating States by another one. The period when the forgotten ghosts of war have returned to the heart of Europe, bringing back fears and questioning the whole system of regional security based on trust and cooperation – the system, which we have been painstakingly building for the last quarter of a century. The process of creating the Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian Security Community, aimed at freeing the OSCE area from the fear of threat coming from one state against another one, declared by the Heads of State and Government at the OSCE Summit in Astana, has been brutally disrupted.

Looking back at what we have been able to achieve in the course of this year, one thing is obvious. The OSCE has proved to be a unique forum, an important venue, where the international community could undertake concrete steps aimed at deescalating the crisis and finding possible solutions. Undeniably, the wide membership in the organization and the existing OSCE toolbox heavily contributed to this. Equally helpful was the Swiss experience in mediation.

Looking ahead at what needs to be done, I would like to reiterate Poland's strong conviction that conflict in and around Ukraine requires political solution based on full respect of its sovereignty and territorial integrity. The continuation of aggressive actions against Ukraine will mean failure of cooperative security system in Europe and failure of all of us, without exceptions, including present here politicians and diplomats. The highest price will be paid, as it is sadly the case right now, by the citizens of Ukraine. We must not allow it.

Dialogue, although sometimes extremely difficult, should be maintained and conducted in good faith by all sides. It is indispensable for ensuring effectiveness of talks and reaching peaceful resolution of the conflict. The Trilateral Contact Group, with Ambassador Heidi Tagliavini as the representative of the OSCE Chairman, is the instrument, which facilitated the only reached so far agreements to stop the bloodshed: the Minsk documents signed on the 5th and the 19th of September. The agreements should not be used, however, as a means to get a second breath before resuming a full scale confrontation. That is why their full

implementation and observance by all sides is so important. In this context, it is necessary to ensure the withdrawal of illegal military formations from Ukraine and effective monitoring of the Ukrainian-Russian state border by the OSCE.

Reaching peace agreement in Ukraine is as important for the people of Ukraine as for the European security system, and I do not hesitate to say: for the world order. Without a lasting peace in Ukraine, based on respect for territorial integrity and sovereignty of this country, it is not possible to build a security system based on cooperation on our continent.

The deficit of trust in the relations among the OSCE participating States, violation of basic norms of inter-state relations in Europe, and the fact that one of the participating States is directly threatened by the actions of its immediate neighbour, make it difficult to look in the existing formats for long term solutions to the fundamental questions of the European security system. If we want to rebuild trust and recreate constructive cooperation, we must stop the ongoing deconstruction of the European security architecture, and ensure that international commitments, including those based on the OSCE acquis, are not violated.

Poland welcomes the Swiss Chairmanship's timely and important proposal to establish a High-Level Panel of Eminent Persons, which would be tasked with preparing a report on the future of security in the OSCE area and proposing related recommendations for the participating States. We think that the Panel should first of all suggest ideas how to ensure full compliance of participating States with the basic norms and principles that have been violated. We should not be tempted, however, to revisit the existing OSCE norms only because one participating State has failed to observe them.

In conclusion, I wish Serbia, which will be chairing the OSCE in the coming year 2015, success and strong resolve in efforts to rebuild European security.
Thank you.