



EUROPEAN UNION

**20th Meeting of the OSCE Ministerial Council
Kyiv, 6 December 2013**

EU closing statement

Let me from the outset thank the Ukrainian Chairmanship-in-Office for the hospitality we have enjoyed during our stay in Kyiv. We would like to thank your hard working team, as well as the Secretary General and his dedicated staff for making this Ministerial Conference a success.

Our meeting took place during challenging times in Ukraine. We hope that political dialogue among the stakeholders will bring results, leading to reducing tensions and resolution of the political crisis. In this process, OSCE principles and commitments, including the right of freedom of expression and peaceful assembly, as well as the safety of journalists, should be upheld without any reservation. We also repeat our commitment to the right of our partners to freely choose the level of ambition and goals to which they aspire in their relations with all their partners. The EU's door remains open.

Over the past year, we have worked hard to strengthen and implement our OSCE objectives, principles and commitments.

During the preparations for the Ministerial Council, the European Union approach was to engage constructively with all partners, and to focus on the proposals of the Chairmanship. We appreciate the decisions agreed in all dimensions of the OSCE as well as on cross-dimensional issues, such as the decision on combating trafficking in human being. We welcome the Helsinki+40 Declaration and look forward to continuing our work towards the Astana vision of a security community. We regret that it was not possible to reach agreement on the Declaration on Afghanistan. At the same time, we are disappointed that it was not possible to agree yet that Libya can become an OSCE Partner for Co-operation.

We welcome the positive outcome in the first dimension with a Ministerial Decision on Small Arms and Light Weapons and Stockpiles on Conventional Ammunition and the Declaration on the Updated OSCE Principles Governing Non-Proliferation. However, we express our disappointment that for the second year, participating States were unable to agree on a decision on FSC related issues; nonetheless the EU remains committed to advance further the FSC work, in particular on the modernisation of the Vienna Document, and on Women, Peace and Security. We strongly welcome the decision adopted by the Permanent Council on an initial set of confidence building measures on cyber security, enhancing the toolkit of the OSCE in this important area.

In the Economic and Environmental dimension, we welcome the adoption of the decision on improving the environmental footprint of energy-related activities in the OSCE region, a priority for the Ukrainian Chairmanship which the European Union has supported from the outset. We furthermore welcome the decision on the protection of energy networks from natural and man-made disasters as a step which requires a broader focus than the decision entails.

We welcome that after two years of absence, it was possible to reach consensus in the Human Dimension. The important decisions on Freedom of Thought, Conscience, Religion or Belief, and on Enhancing OSCE efforts to implement the Action Plan on improving the situation of Roma and Sinti within the OSCE area, with a particular focus on Roma and Sinti women, youth and children, will strengthen our human dimension commitments. All participating States now need to implement them fully. At the same time, we regret that due to the strong opposition of some participating States it was not possible to reach consensus on the draft decision on the protection of journalists despite earlier agreement on this issue in other international fora. The EU was ready to do so again. Especially here from Kyiv, it would have sent a powerful signal that violence, harassment and intimidation of journalists cannot be tolerated. We call upon all participating States to fully implement the international standards on safety of journalists.

We showed our constructive attitude also when discussing freedom of movement and human contacts in the OSCE area on which we did not reach consensus.

Mr Chairman,

We welcome the Ministerial statement issued today on the '5+2' process and we pay tribute to the commitment and creativity shown by the Ukrainian Chairmanship-in-Office. We also welcome the ministerial statement on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. We regret that it was again not possible to agree on a statement on the Geneva International Discussions.

At the same time and for the past ten years, we have not been able to agree on a political declaration which acknowledges the realities of the protracted conflicts in the OSCE region. We deplore that we were not able to do so this year again. However, this should not stop us from doing our utmost to resolve these conflicts, including by building confidence. We owe it to the citizens of our region, and the European Union stands ready to continue our strong support to these efforts.

We welcome the recommendations of the OSCE Parallel Civil Society Conference which was organised by the Civic Solidarity Platform here in Kyiv before the Ministerial Council. These recommendations clearly document alarming trends as regards fundamental rights in the OSCE region and include a number of

innovative proposals on how to strengthen implementation of human dimension commitments.

Finally, Mr Chairman, I want to pledge our support to the incoming Swiss OSCE Chairmanship and wish the new Chairmanship every success.

Thank you.

Mr. Chairman, I kindly request that this statement be annexed to the Journal.

The Candidate Countries the former Yugoslav Republic of MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO* and SERBIA*, the Countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates ALBANIA and BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA, and the EFTA country LIECHTENSTEIN, member of the European Economic Area, as well as GEORGIA and ANDORRA align themselves with this statement.

* The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.