



## **20<sup>TH</sup> MEETING OF THE OSCE MINISTERIAL COUNCIL**

### **Statement by Greece**

**Kyiv, 5 December 2013**

Mr. Chairperson,

Distinguished Ministers,

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. At the outset, I would like to thank our Ukrainian hosts for their warm hospitality and to congratulate Minister Kozhara and his able team on their efforts to revitalize the work of the OSCE in all three Dimensions, particularly by moving forward the “Helsinki + 40 process”, in order to develop further the dialogue on European Security.
2. Let me also state that Greece fully aligns itself to the statement delivered by the European Union. Allow me to add some national points of view. Two years ahead of the 40th anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act, the OSCE area is going through a crucial transitional phase. In a period of economic crisis, persisting conflicts and new threats, the OSCE’s role should be revitalized, so as to allow the Organization to cope more efficiently and effectively with challenges ahead.
3. The experience of the “Corfu process” and its spirit of openness, inclusiveness and transparency demonstrated that the OSCE Community is able to set up and achieve commonly defined security goals, if political will and genuine engagement prevails over narrowly perceived national interests.
4. Mindful of the achievements of the past, the “Helsinki+40 process” provides an excellent opportunity for OSCE participating States to reaffirm their commitment to the concept of comprehensive, co-operative, equal and indivisible security.

Mr. Chairperson,

5. Greece, in its capacity as rotating Presidency of the Council of the European Union in the first half of 2014, is ready to contribute in strengthening the co-operation between the EU and the OSCE in addressing common challenges to security. Let me outline briefly some of these challenges that are unequivocally linked to security and stability in the wider OSCE area and have been taken up as our EU Presidency priorities.

6. First, the urgent need to address the severe impact of lack of economic growth and high rates of unemployment on the younger generation, in particular. We believe that the OSCE participating States should pay specific attention to the younger generation and the challenges it is confronted with. Towards that direction, we welcome the intention of the incoming Swiss Chairmanship to give young people a voice and enhance their engagement in the OSCE.

7. Second, to take without delay, a more decisive action on the problem of illegal migration that has created an unprecedented humanitarian challenge and increasing security pressures on border management and on policies against organized crime and terrorism. This phenomenon fuels social tensions threatening social cohesion and stability of States. It is only in common action that the negative aspects of migration flows can be addressed efficiently in a comprehensive and cross-dimensional manner.

8. Last but not least, the Greek EU Presidency will also focus on aspects of strengthening maritime security policies. Greece, as a major maritime power with its vast experience and expertise, stands ready to contribute in that area. We will intensify dialogue and co-operation with all partners that share the same strategic interest.

Ladies and gentlemen,

9. Strengthening security throughout the OSCE in a comprehensive and unified manner is a common obligation rather than an option. We commend OSCE's efforts and work through its Field Operations. In the Western Balkans, the focus should remain on supporting democratization, inter-ethnic peace, stability, cooperation and good-neighbourly relations throughout the region.

10. Addressing socio-economic challenges and transnational threats in Central Asia and strengthening the OSCE's engagement with Afghanistan is another important area where OSCE's contribution can have a positive impact.

11. We welcome the progress made so far in an area of particular importance, that of cyber security and, more specifically, in promoting and agreeing on a set of cyber confidence building measures.

12. The real test is in the resolution of conflicts in accordance with international law and obligations. The South Caucasus remains, in this respect, a source of concern

13. Greece reiterates its firm support to the efforts of the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs and of the Personal Representative of the CiO in maintaining peace and promoting a viable solution to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

14. We express also our support for the continuation of the Geneva Talks, as the only forum to solve the crisis and restore peace in Georgia on the basis of international law.

15. We also welcome the efforts to strengthen the negotiations within the “5+2” format for the settlement of the Transdnistrian conflict in all its aspects and for the benefit of the population on both sides of the Dniester/Nistru river.

16. The OSCE has a remarkable record in facilitating agreements on conventional arms control and Confidence and Security Building Measures. Regrettably, political micro-considerations have resulted in the abuse of agreed procedures and long-standing practices, thus affecting negatively transparency and mutual trust.

17. The Forum for Security Co-operation should resume its role of supporting dialogue and efforts for the restoration of a functional conventional arms control system, based on inclusiveness, reciprocity and predictability. Meanwhile, no efforts should be spared in enhancing the effectiveness of the Vienna Document in a comprehensive and cost reasonable way.

18. Furthermore, we should take advantage of the unexplored potential within the OSCE’s comprehensive concept of security in addressing global financial and environmental challenges, as well as energy issues.

19. Within this scope, we must strengthen OSCE’s strategic response by enhancing the already developed expertise in the area of good governance and transparency, notably taking into consideration the renewal of the relevant commitments in the Dublin Declaration on Good Governance.

20. It is also beyond doubt that security and democracy, for that matter, are inconceivable without the respect of human rights and fundamental freedoms of all individuals. Participating States must step up their efforts in ensuring the full enjoyment of their citizens’ fundamental freedoms, including freedom of expression. Existing commitments in the area of Media must be enhanced and adapted to new technological changes and emerging challenges. We believe that adoption of measures towards strengthening safety

of journalists guaranteed only through the full exercise of the freedom of expression, should be supported.

21. The OSCE with its unique network of institutions remains a broad Organization that unifies people across the wide Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian space.

22. Greece fully supports the important role of the three Personal Representatives on Tolerance, as well as of the Special Representative of the Chairperson-in-Office on Gender Issues, in assisting participating States in implementing their relevant commitments. Indeed, this year, all four Representatives paid a visit to Greece upon invitation by the Government. This clearly demonstrates the determination of my Authorities to effectively address existing challenges in the field of tolerance and non-discrimination and gender and to have an open and constructive dialogue with the relevant OSCE Institutions in this regard. The Greek Government looks forward to their recommendations and we encourage all participating States that haven't done so to consider inviting them for a joint visit.

23. I would like to stress the essential role of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly in promoting mutual trust and solutions, including in the field of conflict prevention and resolution, as well as through its constructive cooperation with the Office of Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, particularly on election observation.

24. Expanding and deepening the relations of the Organization with our Partners for Co-operation, both Mediterranean and Asian, constitute a fundamental prerequisite to ensure the security of the wider OSCE region.

25. Greece attaches particular importance to strengthening dialogue and co-operation with our Mediterranean Partners in all three dimensions and is willing to support initiatives that will be undertaken by the OSCE in that direction. Outreach activities in the field of maritime security could contribute to a safer maritime environment, an essential element for development and growth.

Mr. Chairperson,

26. As I said at the beginning of my intervention, our Meeting here in Kyiv offers a unique opportunity and a challenge to recommit ourselves for a more efficient OSCE. Let's use this opportunity and face the challenge!

27. In concluding, I wish to extend my best wishes to the incoming Swiss and Serbian Chairmanships and assure them of our full support and cooperation.

Thank you for your attention.