



**STATEMENT BY THE MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF
THE REPUBLIC OF SERBIA H.E. Mr. IVAN MRKIĆ AT THE
20th MEETING OF THE OSCE MINISTERIAL COUNCIL
KYIV, 5 DECEMBER 2013**

Mr. Chairman,
Mr. Secretary General,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

At the outset, I would like to thank our hosts for their hospitality and in particular our Chairman-in-Office H.E. Minister Leonid Kozhara for the excellent organization of the Ministerial Council in Kyiv. Let me also congratulate the whole Ukrainian Chairmanship team for their dedication and their stewardship during this year in office.

Mr. Chairman,

We would especially like to extend our appreciation for the tireless work of the Ukrainian Chairmanship in order to launch the Helsinki +40 process and place it on a solid ground. Since the last Ministerial Council meeting in Dublin, we had a year of dynamic deliberations in our Organization. We particularly value the level of engagement of all participating States which resulted in frank and comprehensive debate.

During this year, joint work with our Swiss colleagues at all levels was marked by two main efforts – to come up with the joint priorities of our consecutive chairmanships for the coming two years and, at the same time, to assist the Ukrainian Chairmanship to shape the Helsinki+40 process. Those two efforts are compatible but each of them has its own logic. Our Joint Workplan presented by my distinguished colleague President D. Burkhalter and myself in July is oriented towards the work of the Organization in the following two years, whereas Helsinki +40 process should be seen as an endeavour with rather far reaching goals of all 57 participating States.

Dear colleagues, I would like to assure you that both of us will retain a transparent approach as we did in the process of conceptualizing the Joint Workplan through extensive consultations with each of the participating States but also OSCE structures and our friends - the Mediterranean and Asian Partners for Cooperation.

We all call upon each other to fulfill the commitments across all three dimensions. On our part, Switzerland and Serbia want to do more by introducing self-evaluation practice of the Chairmanship and voluntary reporting as a new practice.

Mr. Chairman,

The incoming Troika jointly prepared the Road Map on Helsinki +40 for the next two years as our guiding plan with the aim of producing tangible results until the end of this process in 2015 and, hopefully, a new strategic orientation of our Organization. The Road Map is inspired by the Astana Summit and founded on existing acquis and commitments. At the same time, it offers an opportunity for courageous steps to be taken as well. We hope that at the end of 2015, we will have an opportunity to meet in Belgrade, maybe at the Summit, to agree on the new strategic orientation of the OSCE, which will be much closer to the security community – the goal our Heads of States and Governments put before us in Astana, during the last Summit of the OSCE in 2010.

This process should be comprehensive, with a view to improving confidence among us and dispelling misperceptions based on lack of trust. It also needs to remain inclusive and, therefore, I would like once again to call upon all participating states to invest additional efforts in order to produce a new strategic orientation of our Organization.

This process will shape our overall activities during the two following years and it will inevitably include discussions on many important and difficult issues such as: reconfirming the undertaken commitments, resolution of protracted conflicts, strengthening the effectiveness of our Organization, future of arms control, to name just a few.

Only through a joint and concerted effort we can expect a successful outcome. Switzerland and Serbia, as consecutive Chairmanships, expect active participation not only of all participating States, but also our Partners, Secretariat and other executive structures as well. More than ever, we need profound cooperation with civil society and academia, and let me use this opportunity to commend the establishment of the so called Track II network.

We strongly believe that, based on political will and vision, this Organization could again have an important place in Euro-Atlantic and Euro-Asian security architecture as it was the case almost 40 years back. If we succeeded in the beginning of our activities as CSCE, afterwards OSCE, and managed to overcome dividing lines throughout our area, today we should also find a way to move forward and agree on a new and common agenda for the XXI century.

Mr. Chairman,

The unique OSCE added value has to be highlighted, be it through independent institutions, field operations, or areas where OSCE is a pioneer. Together with already proven adaptability and flexibility, OSCE has its specific expertise which other international organizations do not have. In that regard, good example is involvement of the OSCE in the elections in our southern province of Kosovo and Metohija.

Protracted conflicts are undoubtedly one of the most difficult issues we are facing with. Their resolution is a matter of urgency. We will continue to support the existing negotiating formats, including through appointment of Swiss and Serbian special representatives on de facto two years time, hoping that perhaps longer term strategy can be of benefit. As a future Chairmanship, we would like to see at least some small but important steps in pursuit of their political settlements. But that cannot be done without parties concerned and their will.

Although we are preparing ourselves to soon assume even greater responsibilities as member of Troika, and then incoming Chairman-in-Office, there are also many other reasons why we pay significant importance to the OSCE. Serbia is utilizing all comparative advantages of our Organization and is regarded as one of the participating States which has a sound and quality relation with all OSCE structures, in particular its institutions. Productive relations developed with Secretary General Lamberto Zannier and his staff will be of utmost importance and for the benefit of Organization itself in the course of 2015. We have built a strong partnership with the OSCE Mission to Serbia which is supporting reform processes in my country. In that regard, we support all requests by participating States which would like to invite OSCE to establish the field presence, including the recent initiative of Mongolia. Let me stress, in addition, that sound basis and functioning of our Organization depends also on clear and sustainable resources.

Mr. Chairman,

European orientation of the region we come from is our strategic orientation. The commitment by all stakeholders in our part of the world to engage on outstanding issues has contributed to the development of mutual trust. Key relationships in our region have begun to visibly improve—and this has taken place in the midst of a renewed impetus in the process of reconciliation. We will continue this path, convinced that it is a unique opportunity to bring better visibility of our region, including through our Chairmanship in 2015.

Having gone through all stages of the conflict cycle, experiences of Western Balkans range from conflict times to the reconciliation period. In that sense, we attach great importance to early warning and CBMs as mechanisms of prevention. We stand ready to share lessons learned with the aim of exploring avenues, together with our Swiss colleagues, in furthering the work of the OSCE in the area of conflict cycle.

Mr. Chairman,

After chairing the Human dimension Committee this year, Serbia will chair next year the Contact Group of Mediterranean partners. We do believe that OSCE can offer assistance to our Mediterranean partners in regard to their democratic transition and economic and social development. We would like to improve our dialogue and work together on various projects, including on follow up activities. We look forward to welcoming Libya among Mediterranean partners.

Finalemment, monsieur le Président, je voudrais souligner encore une fois que nous allons faire tout notre possible pour améliorer les activités de notre organisation, afin que l'OESC accomplis les meilleurs résultats possibles pendant la période suivante de la présidence de la Suisse et de la Serbie.

En suivant la tradition habituelle, permettez moi finalement de souhaiter tout le succès a la présidence future. Néanmoins, cher Didier, je voudrais souligner que, comme précédemment, vous pouvez compter sur notre soutien et notre volonté de continuer a travailler ensemble dans les deux prochaines années.

Merci beaucoup.