

**Closing Statement by Chairperson-in-Office of the OSCE, Eamon Gilmore
TD, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade of Ireland**

19th OSCE Ministerial Council, Dublin

7 December 2012

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a pleasure for me to address the closing session of the 19th OSCE Ministerial Council. As we reflect on what has been achieved at the Council, we can be satisfied that the Organization has emerged strengthened from the decisions we have made in Dublin. I am happy that we have renewed our determination to work together on many key issues, to the benefit of our citizens.

I am delighted that we have agreed to launch the Helsinki+40 process, setting out a clear path from now until 2015 for work which will significantly strengthen the Organization. I stand ready to support the incoming Chairmanships of Ukraine, Switzerland and Serbia, as they strive to reinforce and revitalise the OSCE, in the lead up to the 40th anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act. This is a major initiative launched under our Chairmanship, which I hope will ensure that this Organization is fully equipped to meet the challenges of the 21st Century. At the start of our Chairmanship, I underlined my wish to see a balanced set of decisions adopted at the Dublin Ministerial Council. Our failure to agree any decisions in the human dimension is a matter of regret to me and reconfirms a worrying trend of recent Ministerial Councils. Of even greater concern, is the sad reality that respect for basic human rights and fundamental freedoms is currently under great threat in many parts of the OSCE region. There are all too many examples of participating States falling short of the OSCE's own human dimension commitments, as well as their obligations under international law. I remain more convinced than ever that we must work to ensure that these commitments and obligations are honoured. I will work tirelessly to protect human rights defenders and to combat discrimination of all kinds, including discrimination against our LGBT fellow citizens.

As Chairperson-in-Office, I have delivered on my commitment to highlight a number of key human rights issues this year. While we were unable to agree on a decision on strengthening media freedom in the OSCE, we held a highly successful Chairmanship Conference on Internet Freedom in Dublin in June, where States, civil society and other key actors shared their respective points of view.

I wish to announce in this context that, immediately after the close of our session today, I plan to sign the US Declaration on Fundamental Freedoms in the Digital Age.

On the protracted conflicts, I am pleased that it has been possible to agree a statement on the Transdnestrian settlement process, the first in many years. As part of the Chairmanship's support for this process, we shared the experience of how peace was achieved in the Northern Ireland Peace Process. Conflict resolution efforts in this and other parts of the OSCE region were a particular priority for the Chairmanship and for me personally.

I welcome the agreement on the Declaration on Good Governance, a significant achievement for the Chairmanship, which will enable the OSCE to deepen its engagement in preventing and countering corruption.

I also welcome the agreement on the final Decision on the counter-terrorism framework and the acknowledgement of the earlier Decisions agreed by way of the Chapeau Decision. We have begun work on the challenging subject of ICT security and I hope that further progress will be possible next year to address this issue which affects all of us.

I would like to thank Minister Poposki and his team for their excellent chairmanship of the Forum for Security Cooperation, leading up to the Dublin Ministerial. I also acknowledge with thanks the work of Latvia and Kyrgyzstan as Chairs earlier in the year. I commend the progress achieved in updating the Vienna Document and the input by the FSC into the Helsinki +40 process.

I wish to take this opportunity to thank a number of key colleagues who have given freely of their experience to the Chairmanship, in order to help me to carry out my role as Chairperson-in-Office. My Personal Representatives on Tolerance and Non-Discrimination, Judge Catherine McGuinness, Rabbi Andrew Baker and Senator Adil Akhmetov have worked hard to promote OSCE commitments on non-discrimination and freedom of religion and I salute their courage and commitment. My Special Representative on Gender Issues, Ms June Zeitlin, who was appointed for the first time in 2012, was very active throughout the year, championing women's rights and gender equality across the OSCE region.

I also wish to thank Ambassador Lars Erik Lundin for his report on strengthening the OSCE's cooperation with relevant international organisations. I expect that the OSCE will draw from this valuable resource when assessing its cooperation with multilateral organizations.

I welcome the progress made on the legal framework of the OSCE. While there was no breakthrough in this area this year, the work done by Ambassador John Bernhard has been extremely useful in clarifying the positions of participating states.

I would also like to thank my Special Representatives, Ambassador Pádraig Murphy and Ambassador Erwan Fouéré, for their tireless efforts in pursuit of progress in relation to the resolution of protracted conflicts.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

In my year as Chair, I have become convinced of the essential contribution which our Organization is making to assure the peace, security and stability of our region. We are faced with an ever-growing number of threats and challenges to this peace, both from within our region - in the form of trans-national threats - and also externally, such as the threat posed by North Korea's pursuit of nuclear and ballistic capabilities. The OSCE must concentrate on building its own capacities in order to better contribute to international efforts to tackle such threats. I hope that this can be addressed in the context of the Helsinki+40 process.

A particular word of thanks goes to Secretary General Zannier and his excellent staff in Vienna and in the Field Missions. Their cooperation and support throughout the year have been exemplary.

Finally, I wish every success to my successor as Chairperson-in-Office, Kostyantyn Gryshchenko of Ukraine. You can rely on my full support and that of Ireland as we continue our engagement with the OSCE Chairmanship as Troika Partners.

Thank You.