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**STATEMENT BY
THE DELEGATION OF ITALY AT THE NINETEENTH MEETING OF
THE OSCE MINISTERIAL COUNCIL**

Dublin, 6 December 2012

Mr. Chairperson,

I wish to thank the Irish Chairmanship and Minister Gilmore for his work. I should like in particular to express our appreciation for the mediation efforts carried out by the Chairmanship. And I also take this opportunity to congratulate the Secretary General, Ambassador Zannier.

Italy is a main contributor to the OSCE budget and one of its biggest supporters, as confirmed by the quantity and quality of the human resources dedicated to this Organization. The State that I represent here today has maintained this commitment over the years because it believes in the unique nature of the OSCE based on a “comprehensive” concept of security.

Awareness of the historical value of the OSCE does not alter the fact that any organization has to affirm its validity over time by creating its own agenda and adapting it to new challenges. The OSCE has reached a crossroads in the unfinished business of creating a genuine security community and of facing new challenges, both qualitative and geographical. Completing the old agenda and addressing the new one are the two tasks confronting us as a community based on common principles. Allow me to welcome the admission of Mongolia to our community, which continues to expand in this way to the east and the south.

Starting with the unfinished agenda and concentrating initially on the first dimension of the OSCE, I believe that we have three essential objectives: relaunching the conventional arms control regime in Europe, enhancing confidence-building measures, and confronting both protracted and frozen conflicts with greater boldness and dynamism. As a community linked by shared commitments, if we fail to make coherent and consistent efforts on these points, it will become difficult to continue to defend the added value that is unique to the OSCE. There is still a long way to go to achieve full implementation of the principles derived from the Helsinki Final Act. The use of force is still widespread, and there are a number of conflicts that have long remained unresolved. We regard the progress made in the negotiations on Transdniestria as an encouraging sign.

Italy believes that there is an evident connection between security, human rights and democracy. As the anniversary of Helsinki approaches, it would be a good thing to recall the fact that it is the existence of this connection that has made possible the reunification of Europe. Today, this very realization should help us to confront new transnational challenges, starting with trafficking in human beings. In the second dimension, it is significant that the

Chairmanship has opted to propose draft decisions on good governance and combating money-laundering by criminal organizations.

Some important decisions (on the strategic framework for police-related activities and on combating illicit trafficking in drugs and their chemical precursors) have already been adopted. Progress on these issues, also in the context of the fight against terrorism and cybersecurity, remains a priority. With regard to combating transnational threats, we are in favour of greater activity by the OSCE, also by strengthening the Conflict Prevention Centre.

The new agenda depends not only on the nature of the challenges to security but also on their geographical spread. Italy believes that the OSCE can make an important contribution to the success of the democratic transitions in the Mediterranean, in particular by means of election monitoring, and to the future stability of Afghanistan.

Historically, the unique feature of the OSCE's method has been its ability to create confidence and security through co-operation based on shared principles. On paper the OSCE has attempted to guarantee stability. In reality it has fostered a dynamic form of stability capable of producing profound transformations in the European space, but without divisive conflicts. The Mediterranean world needs a similar frame of reference.

I should like to mention one more concept that I believe to be particularly important in the current transitional phase of the international system. One of the added values of the OSCE has been its ability to combine respect for States' sovereignty with the promotion of the rights of their inhabitants. This is an ability that we continue to need and whose importance seems indeed to have increased again.

The promotion and defence of fundamental rights is one of the pillars of Italy's participation in international organizations. In this context, we have been concerned to note a decline in the protection of some of the rights that the OSCE participating States are committed to respect. We welcome the two draft decisions proposed by the Chairmanship on freedom of the media and xenophobia, which together with freedom of religion, are matters of priority for Italy.

In Astana the OSCE initiated a project for an indivisible, free and democratic Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian security community based on a more homogeneous political, economic and cultural space capable of looking towards the future and of putting behind us the logic of bloc divisions and spheres of influence. In Dublin we must take the next step by adopting the Helsinki+40 decision with its recommendations for gradually implementing this project, which unites us and gets back to our common interests and values.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.