



Statement by H. E. Lubomír Zaorálek

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Mr. Chairman, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me thank the German Chairmanship for hosting this year's Ministerial Council. Dear Frank Walter, your team and you personally have done a tremendous job throughout this year under difficult circumstances.

When we met in Potsdam in September, we agreed that political ownership and political steering by all participating states is an important prerequisite for turning our Organization into a part of the solution, rather than a problem.

There are difficult choices to be made. To start a genuine dialogue, divergent views and perceptions of European security must respect the values, principles and commitments. Acting outside of international law framework carries a danger of raising new dividing lines in Europe. These may create a mirage of stability. A mirage which will haunt, sooner or later, the very creators of these divisions. Our effort would be hardly sustainable if in its foundations we would not exercise the determination to fully restore the respect for the fundamental principles and commitments enshrined in the Helsinki Final Act from 1975 and the Paris Charter from 1990.

Our work under the German Chairmanship has created better conditions for us to focus on the following five priorities:

1/ Removing the dividing lines in Europe. Ukraine's, Moldova's, Georgia's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity within internationally recognized borders must be restored. Solution must be found to the conflict in the Nagorno-Karabakh region, based on accepted principles. We should support the negotiating formats, and stand firmly behind the OSCE staff on the ground.

2/ Bringing us closer to the problems which matter most to our citizens. Fight against terrorism and dealing with migration flows and its consequences seem to me as the most important.

3/ Arms control and confidence and security building measures. Frank-Walter's initiative to re-engage on arms control and the structured dialogue suggested by the United States are a timely

and appropriate way to deal with growing security concerns over militarization of our relations and new threats to European security.

4/ Approaching the problems in a strategic manner. Enhanced connectivity, together with its confidence building potential, deserves to be seen as an innovative and pertinent part of our efforts. We should not be afraid to look at the bigger picture and seek other elements of possible integration, in a constructive way and in an appropriate format.

5/ Making the work of our organization effective. We need to better integrate three dimensions of our work. Current challenges are multidimensional and so must be our response. We have to make the structure of the OSCE less rigid and more flexible in order to strengthen its ability to think and act horizontally. This is exactly what the Secretary General has worked for so hard under challenging circumstances throughout his mandate, and I would like to thank him, and recognize this publicly.

Mr. Chairman, let me assure the incoming Austrian Chairmanship of our full, and unwavering support. They would certainly need it on crucial issues. We have failed to fill vacancies in the very important OSCE institutions, and more is to come next year. The Organization needs experienced and committed professionals who would deliver a comprehensive approach to security, to the benefit of us all.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.