

Statement by
His Excellency Mr. Erlan Idrissov, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the
Republic of Kazakhstan, at the 20th OSCE Ministerial Council
(Kyiv, 6 December 2013)

Mr. Chairperson,
Your Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen,

First of all, let me join the previous speakers in sincerely thanking the Ukrainian Chairmanship of the OSCE for their excellent organization of this meeting and warm reception in Kyiv.

Over the past year we have witnessed the successful implementation of the stated goals of our Ukrainian colleagues and their realistic and pragmatic approach to the Chairmanship in all major areas of the Organization's activity.

The last **OSCE Summit**, held in 2010 in Astana, adopted a **Declaration** that outlined the current priorities of the Organization, highlighting equally its three dimensions.

The Astana Declaration creates a vision for a **security community** designed to search for answers to current challenges. It should unite all OSCE members in the Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian space without dividing lines, conflicts, spheres of influence, and zones with different levels of security.

We believe that the Ukrainian Chairmanship has continued to work on this successfully within the ongoing **"Helsinki+40" process**.

In this regard, we welcome the close cooperation and continuity of the respective Irish and Ukrainian OSCE Chairmanships. We are confident that this progress will continue in 2014-2015 under the Swiss and Serbian chairmanships as we proceed to a discussion of the key aspects of comprehensive security, as well as the most pressing issues on the OSCE's agenda.

It is encouraging to note that after almost 40 years the Helsinki Final Act has not lost its relevance and continues to have a positive impact on world and regional politics. We believe that the "Helsinki+40" process should focus on the implementation of the Astana Declaration's provisions for establishing a common and indivisible security community in which various regional organizations can work together to solve security problems.

We need to work consistently and systematically on reaching a critical understanding of the issues facing the Organization, implementing decisions, and strengthening our potential responses throughout the conflict cycle.

In today's rapidly changing environment, traditional security issues, including military transparency, confidence-building measures and the strengthening of the overall capacity to combat transnational threats, have not lost their relevance.

It is necessary to continue implementing the provisions of the Astana Declaration including "hard security" issues **in the political and military sphere**. Increased focus must be devoted to issues of non-proliferation, counter-terrorism, organized crime, drug trafficking, border security, cyber-crime, illegal migration and arms trafficking. We support the work of the OSCE Department of Transnational Threats, which has proven its effectiveness.

Kazakhstan, as a country that has unilaterally renounced nuclear weapons and nuclear testing, calls upon OSCE family to continue actively contribute to promoting Resolution 1540 in the OSCE's space.

We attach great importance to the revitalization, update and modernization of the OSCE's confidence- and security-building regimes, which are the main tools for ensuring military stability, predictability, and transparency.

In May this year, Kazakhstan's Ministry of Defense together with the Secretariat, the Centre in Astana and participating States organized a regional seminar in Astana on the practical implementation of the Vienna Document 2011. The seminar aimed to improve the implementation of commitments of participating States in Central Asia.

We believe that the exchange of national experiences contributes to confidence-building measures in the OSCE region.

I would like to draw attention to the fact that this year experts from the OSCE, Russia and Ukraine have successfully removed 410 tons of unused stocks of a rocket fuel component known as "mélange" from Kazakhstan for further processing at special facilities in Russia. We are grateful to the Ukrainian Chairmanship, as well as our Spanish and Russian partners for their contributions to this project.

We hope that in future, our experts, having gained this experience, will be involved in the implementation of similar operations in other countries.

Dear colleagues,

One of the important aspects of the Organization's work is collaboration with our partners on **Afghanistan**.

Given the fact that the development of the situation in Afghanistan could have serious implications for regional and international security, the OSCE should make its own contribution to the collective efforts of the international community to promote the construction of a stable, independent, prosperous, and free Afghanistan.

We must continue to develop a multilateral mechanism of cooperation between the OSCE, the UN, and other regional organizations to resolve the issues presented by Afghanistan, to achieve a high level of coordination and to avoid any overlap of effort. We believe that the OSCE, with its significant experience, together with the UN and other international organizations could help strengthen the capacity of border services in Central Asian countries, and participate in the implementation of programs to combat narcotics in Afghanistan and bordering countries.

Accordingly, I would like to stress the importance of the OSCE's cooperation with such fora as the CSTO, CICA, and the Istanbul Process. Close coordination will promote a more focused approach by our states and members of these organizations under the auspices of UN Security Council resolutions.

The key criterion for any external actor is that assistance should not substitute or undermine a genuine national reconciliation process in Afghanistan.

In the economic and environmental sphere, more attention needs to be paid to issues of transport and transit, energy security, environmental protection and water management. Nowadays, issues related to water and energy in Central Asia have the potential to cause conflicts. Water-shortages due to rapid population growth is a particular problem.

As is known, the environmental crisis in the Aral Sea basin – recognized by the international community as the biggest ecological calamity of the 20th century – remains an urgent issue in our region. The high concentration of salt and reduction in the volume of water in what was once a large inland sea has been a disaster for millions of people living around the Aral Sea, which lost three-quarters of its volume in the 1990s.

In this regard, the issues referred to in the 2003 Maastricht Strategy remain urgent to this day. They are as relevant now as they were ten years ago. The Strategy's tenth anniversary in 2013 could serve as a good opportunity to review the work of the "Maastricht Plus" document. Unfortunately, we have not seen any progress on the ideas that were outlined in this document. However, we are ready to act and will continue to cooperate further on this initiative.

Our efforts should be focused on confidence-building measures that will help strengthen regional cooperation as well as the transfer of advanced technologies, management know-how and innovation.

We welcome the invitation extended by the Ukrainian Chairmanship to the Cooperation Council of Turkic Speaking States to attend the current OSCE Ministerial as a guest. We believe that the participation of this regional cooperation mechanism in the work of OSCE will contribute to furthering the goals shared by both organizations.

Kazakhstan, for its part, has adopted a Concept for transitioning to a **“green economy”**, which aims, among other things, to increase legal incentives for energy and water efficiency. We call on our OSCE partners to join us in promoting the theme of “green economy” and support the “Future Energy” themed EXPO exhibition, which Astana will host in 2017.

Our long-standing priorities in human dimension are focused around issues of freedom of movement and religion, inter-religious and inter-ethnic tolerance, combating human trafficking and the need to develop common standards and methodologies for election monitoring to ensure the transparency and objectivity of observer missions.

I would like to mention the progress made on **UNSC Resolution 1325 (2000) concerning “Women, Peace and Security”**. Kazakhstan, as a co-author of this resolution, is making great efforts to implement its principles.

Therefore, in November this year an International Conference on “Women, Peace and Security” was held in Almaty, which once again confirmed the international importance of this document in national action plans and strategies for gender equality. We would like to express gratitude to the organizers of this event. In particular, we would like to thank the OSCE’s Secretary General Lamberto Zannier for video-addressing the participants of this two-day international conference.

Being a multi-ethnic and multi-confessional state, the principles of **tolerance and non-discrimination** are essential for Kazakhstan. We are concerned about rising cases of hostile language, hate crimes and xenophobia, including in the Internet. Therefore, we welcome the development of instruments that promote effective policy measures in these areas.

In his speech at the opening of the OSCE Summit in Astana on December 1, 2010, the President of Kazakhstan called on participating States to develop a new document “OSCE: Towards Tolerance in the New Decade”. The OSCE Conference on “Tolerance and Non-Discrimination”, which was convened by the Ukrainian Chairmanship in Tirana, Albania on May 21-22, 2013, highlighted the importance of exchanging experience in inter-ethnic, inter-religious matters and revealed remaining issues and we hope that our joint efforts in this important area will strengthen.

The obvious need for developing common standards and **methodologies to monitor elections** remains a debated issue in our organization. In order to put an end to numerous differences, we propose to once again consider in details recommendations contained in the final report of the Panel of Eminent Persons, published in June 2005. Particular attention must be paid to the standards for observing elections, developing criteria and methodologies, and ensuring the transparency and professionalism of observation missions.

Another important question is the **OSCE’s legal status**, which continues to create fundamental and operational problems. We highly appreciate the efforts of the Ukrainian Chairmanship to transform the OSCE into a full-fledged international organization.

Indeed, one year ago Kazakhstan’s delegation circulated among participating OSCE States the joint position of CSTO Member States on the draft constituent document. We call for a continuation of the dialogue on the legal status of the OSCE, including discussions within the framework of the “Helsinki+40” process.

It is obvious that the future of the OSCE remains a key point on our agenda, as well as the need for the OSCE to adapt to new international realities and to strengthen its comparative advantages.

I believe that the OSCE's Anniversary Year in 2015 is an occasion for all of us to take stock of our work with in the Organization. As for Kazakhstan we are proud of our engagement with the OSCE and are eager to continue contributing to deliver on its mission.

Kazakhstan has made significant progress in economic development, built mature political and civic institutions, and gained experience in all three security dimensions. We will evolve Kazakhstan's interaction with the OSCE to meet new realities and goals.

Kazakhstan's main priority within the Organization in the coming years will continue to be the promotion of the legacy of the Astana OSCE Summit. As a stable and reliable partner in promoting peace and cooperation between nations, Kazakhstan has announced its candidacy for a non-permanent seat on the UN Security Council for 2017-2018 and we count on the support of OSCE member states in 2016 elections. We aim to continue implementing the specific political and strategic tasks set before us to achieve the strategic goal designated by the Astana Declaration – the creation of a Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian Security Community.

Based on the current agenda of the OSCE, we call upon all participating States to continue forming a security community in the OSCE by:

1. Preserving the existing regulatory arms control framework and adapting it to new challenges, as well as further implementing conventional arms control and significantly improving confidence- and security-building measures;
2. Cooperating to resolve long-standing conflicts; to prevent the build-up of tensions; and to promote reconciliation processes in the OSCE area for the long term;
3. Assessing the situation in Afghanistan after 2014 and its impact on the OSCE, and agreeing on appropriate actions;
4. Further developing the OSCE's agenda to counter transnational threats, focusing on countering cyber security, counter-terrorism, and drug trafficking;
5. Developing specific initiatives to promote dialogue and facilitate the implementation of relevant international instruments in the economic and environmental area;
6. Improving the efficiency of the OSCE human dimension by means of monitoring the proper implementation of obligations by all OSCE participating States equally, and optimizing the cycle of relevant activities;
7. Providing a platform for promoting mutual understanding between nations in matters of religion, inter-religious and inter-ethnic tolerance.

In the light of the events taking place in Kyiv these days, I would like to emphasize that Kazakhstan has been always a strong proponent of integration processes. At the same time, Kazakhstan believes that the political choice for the pattern of development of any country, including the choice of any integration scheme, is the sovereign right of any independent state and should be based, above all, on the national interests of the country.

We welcome the interest of Ukraine towards the integration processes taking place in the framework of the Customs Union and the Eurasian Economic Space. At the same time, we do not see how this could prevent the natural search for other integration opportunities.

We believe that any choice should be made in a well-informed calm, and pragmatic way, within the national legal framework and the existing legal instruments.

In conclusion, I would like to welcome the incoming Swiss and Serbian chairmanships, as well as to thank Ukraine's Chairmanship for warm hospitality and highly professional stewardship of the Organization.

Thank you for your attention.