



Statement of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office, First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia Ivica Dacic at the Council of Foreign Ministers of the Collective Security Treaty Organization held in Dushanbe:

“Minister Aslov,
Secretary General Bordyuzha,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great honour and pleasure for me to be joining you at this meeting of the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) in Dushanbe.

It is for the first time that the OSCE has the privilege to take part in this gathering. I would like to thank the hosts, the Republic of Tajikistan, for extending this invitation. I am particularly glad that this opportunity arises during the Serbian Chairmanship of the OSCE, also considering that my country takes a great interest in your organization. I would like to take the opportunity to congratulate Tajikistan for assuming the Presidency of the Collective Security Treaty Organization in 2015 and wish you all success in this important endeavour.

Before I go on, I would like to say a few words about the Ukrainian crisis. The crisis has questioned many assumptions about the post-Cold War European order. At the same time, it has also demonstrated the enduring strengths and advantages of the OSCE as an organization particularly well-suited to link the Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian regions and facilitate co-operative solutions. The Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine is the most visible example of the OSCE's ability to launch collective actions even during a crisis. The OSCE has also been continuously engaged in trying to find a diplomatic solution to the current crisis, most notably through the work of my Special Representative, Ambassador Tagliavini, within the Trilateral Contact Group. While many challenges remain, the Package of Measures continues to be the best available roadmap toward stabilising the situation.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Collective Security Treaty Organization is an important partner for the OSCE. The two organizations share a number of similar goals. All the Member States of the Collective Security Treaty Organization are also OSCE Participating States. The OSCE appreciates the long and

valuable experience the CSTO has acquired working in Central Asia, particularly in the area of countering transnational threats to security. We closely follow and value your multifaceted activities in combating terrorism, organized crime, human trafficking and drug trafficking in the region. We share your goal of contributing to security and stability in Central Asia, including the challenges stemming from Afghanistan. We look forward to exploring the potential for closer co-operation.

Let me briefly summarize the OSCE efforts in Central Asia. The OSCE has field operations in all five Central Asian States with more than 500 staff members. Our comprehensive approach to security, which covers three dimensions, politico-military, economic and environmental and the human dimension, allows us to provide targeted support in key areas to promote security and stability. All OSCE activities are jointly agreed and closely co-ordinated with the host nations, making our programmes truly co-operative and well-targeted.

It is in the OSCE's vital interest to strengthen its co-operation with other international and regional organizations active in Central Asia, to foster exchange of experience and knowledge. Maintaining and enhancing regular political and expert level co-operation is important for identifying possible synergies and avoiding duplication of effort. Our two organizations could interact more closely on issues related to long-term needs for the development of the region, including Afghanistan related challenges.

In this context, I am pleased to note increased practical co-operation between the OSCE and the Collective Security Treaty Organization in the past few years. Regular meetings at the level of Secretaries General, increased staff level contacts and invitations to various working-level events are all positive steps in this regard.

There is a lot of common ground for further developing ties between the OSCE and the CSTO, particularly when addressing regional challenges related to Afghanistan. Both organizations have been active in assisting several Central Asian states in protecting their borders with Afghanistan.

The OSCE remains committed to the implementation of the "Heart of Asia – Istanbul Process" and notably with regard to Confidence Building Measures in the areas of counter-terrorism, counter-narcotics and education. The effectiveness of all these efforts will depend on the Afghan Government's commitment to strengthen the rule of law, tackle corruption and improve good governance. However, the Central Asian states can make an even stronger contribution to fostering stability in and around Afghanistan. People-to-people exchange, economic co-operation and trade and the pursuit of joint infrastructure projects could provide the basis for constructive and mutually beneficial long-term relations between Afghanistan and its Central Asian neighbours. In this regard, the OSCE stands ready to enhance its role as a platform for practical co-operation and dialogue among all stakeholders.

CSTO Secretary General Bordyuzha has emphasized the necessity and importance of international co-operation in the area of border security and management. The March 2014 visit of the Director of the OSCE Border Management Staff College (BMSC) and Director of the OSCE's Transnational Threats Department to the CSTO Secretariat in Moscow helped to set

the stage for enhancing co-operation between our two organizations. We were particularly pleased to host Secretary General Bordyuzha at the College in October last year. This provided us with us an excellent opportunity to present the College's work and learn more about the CSTO's activities, experience and insight in the area of border management and security.

The College is one of the OSCE's flagship projects in Central Asia. More than 2,100 border officials from 50 OSCE participating States and Partner nations have been trained by the College since it was established in 2009. The wider aim of the College is to enhance border security systems across the OSCE area. More specifically, it is also one of our primary tools in engaging with Afghanistan and Afghan border officers represent a sizeable portion of the College's trainees to date.

The high-level CSTO visit to the BMSC last year and subsequent contacts this year have laid solid foundations for further practical co-operation between our organizations. I believe the same model of co-operation could be replicated also in other areas, particularly with the OSCE Academy in Bishkek, which through its activities has been educating Central Asian and foreign students to become specialists in international relations, security and conflict prevention. I also support the idea of establishing an Afghanistan research centre in Central Asia.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Over the last two years, the OSCE, through the so-called Helsinki+40 Process has conducted a thorough debate on common security challenges and the state of the Organization's agenda. This debate is continuing despite the very difficult environment we are facing. Against the backdrop of the current crisis in European security, we cannot predict how long it will take to renew the necessary trust and confidence to make significant progress toward that strategic objective but we do know that dialogue is the only way forward.

You can rest assured that in this 40th anniversary year of the Helsinki Final Act, the Serbian Chairmanship of the OSCE will do its utmost to promote discussion on ways out of the current impasse in European security. In this context, let me also briefly mention the Panel of Eminent Persons on European Security as a Common Project, which was launched by the OSCE Troika last December and which will certainly contribute new worthwhile ideas both in relation to lessons learned from Ukraine and the wider security agenda.

Whatever the format and ambition, any reform-oriented discussion we hold in the OSCE will always seek to identify ways of increasing the OSCE's co-operation with other regional and international organizations in order to strengthen our respective and collective impact while avoiding unnecessary overlap. Today's meeting is an excellent opportunity to further assess our potential for cooperation.

Thank you once again for inviting me to attend this meeting".