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## Foreword by the Secretary General of the OSCE

The year 2015 marked the 40th anniversary of the signing of the Helsinki Final Act, the founding document of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE). Revolutionary for its time, the Final Act represented a historic triumph of co-operation over confrontation and paved the way for the end of the Cold War. Its ten fundamental principles have become pillars of the European security order. It also pioneered the comprehensive approach to security by recognizing a direct link between its politico-military, economic and environmental, and human rights aspects.

The international security landscape has changed significantly since then. With the end of the Cold War and the disappearance of the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia, the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) faced new realities, including the emergence of new states in Central and Eastern Europe, South-eastern Europe, and Central Asia. The CSCE soon turned into the OSCE, transforming primarily from a venue for political dialogue into an organization equipped with permanent structures and operational capacities. Over time, the OSCE has successfully managed to apply its unique comprehensive and multidimensional approach to security to an increasing number of challenges: from arms proliferation and the promotion of military transparency to the resolution of protracted conflicts, support for transition processes and democratic reforms, and combating transnational threats. It has developed and strengthened its ability to provide expert advice and capacity-building support in areas such as good governance, economic reform, environmental protection, protection of the rights of national minorities, tolerance and non-discrimination, anti-terrorism, border management, and combating human trafficking. It has built strong partnerships with other multilateral actors as well as its neighbours in the southern Mediterranean and Asian regions to jointly respond to common security challenges. Ultimately, the OSCE's inclusiveness, impartiality, and comprehensive approach to security have proved to be its key comparative advantages in responding to today's rapidly changing security environment and in addressing new challenges such as those related to terrorism and increasing violent radicalization or moving to include new themes on its agenda, such as those relating to the security impact of climate change. And as Europe faces unprecedented inflows of migrants and refugees, the OSCE's comprehensive approach and the richness of its toolbox are proving invaluable in addressing many aspects of this unfolding crisis.

While over the last 40 years the CSCE/OSCE has repeatedly demonstrated its enduring relevance in flexibly adapting to changing security needs in the Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian region, the ongoing crisis in and around

Ukraine is perhaps the most difficult challenge the Organization has faced since the end of the Cold War.

Since the beginning of the crisis, the OSCE has played a central role in the international community's efforts to stabilize the situation. As the only regional security organization involving all key stakeholders with vested interests, the OSCE has proved to be well placed to de-escalate the conflict and support the political process. Its longstanding presence on the ground in Ukraine and its established record as an impartial observer and a credible and neutral facilitator were no less important. The rapid deployment of the Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine and its ability to quickly adapt to changing realities, particularly when it was entrusted with supporting the implementation of the Minsk Agreements, is a huge achievement for the Organization. But in fact, the entire OSCE toolbox has been mobilized to respond to the unfolding crisis, and the scope of the OSCE's response has covered all phases of the conflict cycle.

The OSCE has amply demonstrated that it can deliver in times of crisis in spite of existing divisions among its participating States. However, regardless of the accomplishments of the OSCE at the operational level, we must also address the underlying causes of these ruptures, which stem from long-term challenges to European security at the political level. Dividing lines had begun to re-emerge well before the turmoil in Ukraine erupted, and mistrust among participating States had been undermining co-operation and constructive engagement in various areas for some time. The crisis in and around Ukraine has only exacerbated the existing disunity and marked a clear retreat from aspirations towards a Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian security community to a confrontational posture and a return to hostile Cold War rhetoric.

In this context, the OSCE as an inclusive platform for dialogue and joint action across the entire Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian region can play a crucial role not only in defusing crises on the ground but also in addressing the challenges facing European security at the strategic level. The OSCE participating States have been engaged in a strategic dialogue almost continuously since 2009, first within the Corfu Process, later through the V-to-V Dialogues, and most recently within the framework of the Helsinki +40 Process that was launched in Dublin in 2012. In January 2015, the OSCE Troika appointed a Panel of Eminent Persons to provide relevant advice on how European security can be re-consolidated as a common project and trust and confidence rebuilt on the basis of the Helsinki Principles and the Charter of Paris. The Panel has produced two reports: an interim report on lessons learned for the OSCE from its engagement in Ukraine and a final report on broader issues of security in the OSCE area. Both reports contain practical recommendations for policy-makers and provide a valuable contribution to a substantive discussion on the future of European security and the OSCE's role. In this regard, co-operation with the OSCE Network of Think Tanks and

Academic Institutions and informal high-level meetings such as OSCE Security Days are increasingly important.

Nevertheless, more than that is needed. A gulf remains between the many ideas and proposals and their real implementation as building blocks towards enhanced trust and confidence. The current situation calls for engagement, leadership, and commitment to jointly explore opportunities for re-launching dialogue and confidence-building to strengthen co-operative security in the OSCE area. This is not an easy task, as mistrust has reached critical levels, and governments are mainly focused on short-term gains as opposed to discussing how to overcome the current stalemate and re-engage in joint work towards long-term objectives. At this particular juncture, the OSCE provides significant value as a platform for inclusive discussions, including on issues pertaining to broader security challenges.

The OSCE also needs to continue enhancing co-operation with the UN and other international and regional organizations under the framework of Chapter VIII of the UN Charter. In today's globalized world, security threats are too complex for any one country or organization to tackle alone. We need to join forces, promote co-operation and find synergies and complementarities.

Today, more than ever, we face a defining moment for European and global security. We urgently need to reaffirm the legitimacy and relevance of the Helsinki fundamental principles and make them more difficult to defy. Although these principles have been violated, they have not lost their validity. We must revive the "spirit of Helsinki" and draw inspiration from the leaders who, 40 years ago, made a commitment to ensure that relations among states are governed and guided by these common principles. We need the same kind of courageous leadership now.