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*22<sup>nd</sup> OSCE Ministerial Council*  
*Belgrade, Serbia*  
*3 December 2015*

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Dear Ministers,  
Distinguished guests,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

It is a privilege to address you today on behalf of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, our Organization's democratic backbone. Through our elected members, the Assembly represents some one billion people in total.

If I could give them a voice in this forum, I would say: *"Please, roll up your sleeves and do more to help us."*

This year, in particular, I think that many of our OSCE citizens, and many of us, too, are surveying a world that sometimes seems to be spiralling out of control. Here are a few recent news headlines that will give you a sense of what I mean:

- "Heavy fighting rages near Donetsk, despite truce"
- "Divisions leave Europe paralyzed as borders close to refugees"
- "French President Calls Terror in Paris an 'Act of War'"
- "Turkey downs Russian warplane near Syria border"

Beyond this selection of headlines, let me add the acute challenges to human rights and democracy that plague the OSCE area today.

Dear Ministers,

*If we can't take far-reaching action now – as the Helsinki Final Act turns 40, and as threats rattle the very foundations of our security – then when can we?*

And so, I am issuing a clear call for all of us here in Belgrade to do just that, and on a wide range of fronts. Recognize that this is not simply my own call, but the call contained in the Assembly's 2015 Helsinki Declaration – the ambitious document that OSCE parliamentarians approved at our Annual Session this year. I urge you to consider it. It represents the voice of parliamentary democracy.

Certainly the OSCE has worked on all of the issues behind those news headlines and we know we can make more progress on all of them. But unfortunately, it seems that the will to compromise is becoming increasingly rare. This is what we must absolutely overcome.

I praise the work of the Serbian Chairmanship, under Minister Dacic, for doing what it pledged to do – acting as an honest broker when it comes to the challenges at hand, including the situation in and around Ukraine.

The OSCE continues to play a critical role within the Trilateral Contact Group. I also thank the dedicated women and men of the Special Monitoring Mission. I had the privilege of meeting some of them recently in Kramatorsk, in the Donetsk region, as well as Chief Monitor Apakan in Kyiv.

But I fear that the situation in eastern Ukraine may be returning to a “ceasefire in name only.” What I saw with my own eyes is alarming.

The Assembly continues to emphasize the need for the eastern border of Ukraine to be fully monitored in its entirety. This would have a very positive impact on our efforts to promote confidence-building, trust and dialogue.

Dialogue, indeed, is the hallmark of the OSCE and its Parliamentary Assembly, as we continue to facilitate direct contacts between Russian and Ukrainian lawmakers. We have continued to try to support mutual understanding and implementation of the Minsk Agreements in bringing the sides together, regardless of the objections that some of you might have.

Dear Ministers,

Based on the discussions that I had the pleasure to have with some of you, I urge you us to consider the creation of a co-ordinating position for migration within the OSCE. This work should be supported by a network of focal points from each of the OSCE bodies. The PA, I'm sure, will be fully on board to support such efforts.

Our deepest condolences go out to the people and governments directly impacted by terrorist attacks this year. Our parliamentarians have recently stressed the need to better address the root causes of radicalization and terrorism. Cutting off its financial lifeline should be one of the effective elements of the strengthened international effort that is necessary.

And finally, I think we should all acknowledge that in order for us to take more action, we must modernize the OSCE. Let me encourage all of us to consider the array of suggestions that the Assembly has offered this year, in the name of the Helsinki +40 Process, for the kind of reform that is essential.

Here's a sample:

- Modify the OSCE's consensus-bound decision-making to enable swifter action, especially in crisis situations;
- Increase investment, both politically and financially, in field presences;
- Better address human rights issues by holding regular, open-press sessions to review countries' records.

I again thank our hosts, the Serbian Chairmanship, for their work this year in very demanding circumstances. Let me warmly welcome the incoming German Chairmanship and commend their stated priorities. The OSCE PA stands ready to work with Foreign Minister Steinmeier and with all of you, offering new ideas, helping to ensure the integrity of elections and taking action for the benefit of us all.

Thank you.