

**Statement by H.E. Mr. Edgars Rinkēvičs,  
Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Latvia  
at the OSCE Ministerial Council Meeting  
Dublin, 6 – 7 December, 2012**

Mr. Chairman,  
Excellences,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

At the beginning I would like to praise Ireland for outstanding work during this year and express our gratitude for the warm Irish hospitality here in Dublin. I also would like to congratulate Mongolia as the new OSCE participating State. No doubt this is an event with the historical significance not only for Mongolia, but also for the entire OSCE region.

Latvia as one of the Chairmanships of the Forum for Security Co-operation (FSC) compliments all participating States, our Partners for Co-operation and the FSC Support Section for excellent cooperation and the work done in the political-military field of security.

By striving for common stability, transparency and predictability the FSC sought to update and modernize the Vienna Document. We also reviewed the implementation of measures on small arms and light weapons, increased security of the stockpiles of conventional ammunition in the participating States and revisited our norms and values in the Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security. Likewise we had a comprehensive and rich Security Dialogue on strategic and topical issues such as transition aspects in Afghanistan, security sector reforms, missile defence, protracted conflicts and non-proliferation.

Latvia is convinced of the essential role of updating and modernizing the Vienna Document and confidence- and security-building measures in promoting security and stability in Europe. Thus we are looking forward to improved and result-oriented negotiations in this regard.

Irish Chairmanship of the OSCE with recently started *Helsinki+40* process has reminded us about our common historical commitments and principles of the OSCE enshrined in the Helsinki Final Act, the Charter of

Paris and other documents. Latvia welcomes Irish Chairmanship's initiative.

We see the creation of the security community as a notable effort in uniting all OSCE participating States by implementing cooperation measures in all three OSCE dimensions. While 2015 will mark four decades since the signing of the Helsinki Final Act, we should continue sharing our inclusive efforts in fostering human security in Europe by solving such issues as arms control, frozen conflicts and transnational threats, instead of coming up with new mission statements.

The ambitions to achieve tangible solutions of protracted conflicts in Georgia, Moldova and Nagorno-Karabakh should not be lessened. We very much look forward to the next chairmanship's plans to pay substantial attention to the field of protracted conflicts.

We see positive trends in the direction of political settlement in Transnistria, Moldova and hope for further sustainable progress. However, only with progress on foreign troop withdrawal, will any settlement be sustainable. A multi-national peacekeeping mission with an international mandate could be a rational way forward.

The consequences of the conflict in Georgia in 2008 will have a long lasting effect on the security situation in the region. The restoration of the OSCE's meaningful presence in Georgia is needed. We remain concerned over the increasing number of incidents at the contact line in Nagorno-Karabakh. The OSCE should closer monitor the situation and provide stronger support for cooperation and negotiations between countries in the region. The conduct of major military exercises in this volatile region should be avoided.

We support strengthening the implementation of commitments on the need to ensure freedom of speech and to protect journalists against violence, threats and intimidation. These fundamental freedoms must be respected and applied. It is regrettable to observe the backtracking from these principles in some OSCE countries, including Russia, where new laws restricting activities of civil society and NGOs have been recently adopted. Such steps are contradictory to the fundamental principles of the OSCE.

Basic principle that the same universal rights that individuals enjoy “offline” – such as freedom of expression, including the freedom to seek information, freedom of assembly and association – must also be upheld and protected online.

Latvia has constantly supported initiatives aimed at open and free internet. Last year Latvia joined other countries in supporting the U.S. initiative on the Fundamental Freedoms in the Digital Age in the framework of the OSCE, as well as made a commitment to join Freedom Online Coalition.

Latvia reaffirms importance of the human dimension in the OSCE concept of comprehensive security. It plays a crucial role in maintaining stability and security in all OSCE participating States. We commend the contribution of all OSCE institutions in strengthening the human rights situation in the OSCE region.

Dear colleagues, let me conclude by wishing the incoming Chairmanship, Ukraine, every success in tackling the tasks ahead. We are ready to support Ukraine in every way in order to solve most complicated issues together.

Thank you!