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**STATEMENT OF THE HOLY SEE**  
**AT THE NINETEENTH MINISTERIAL COUNCIL**  
**OF THE ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY**  
**AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE (OSCE)**

**DELIVERED BY**  
**HIS EXCELLENCY**  
**ARCHBISHOP DOMINIQUE MAMBERTI**  
**SECRETARY FOR THE HOLY SEE'S RELATIONS WITH STATES**

Dublin (Ireland)  
6 – 7 December 2012

1. *Introduction.* The delegation of the Holy See wishes to thank His Excellency Mr. Eamon Gilmore, the Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade of Ireland, for the commitment with which Ireland has exercised the Chairmanship of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) during this past year. The Holy See is particularly grateful for the warm hospitality of the organizers of this Nineteenth OSCE Ministerial Council in Dublin. Ireland's chairmanship has been marked by the desire to reinforce a dialogue of culture and peace within the OSCE region, and for this we are most appreciative.

2. The Holy See welcomes Mongolia as the fifty-seventh OSCE participating State and looks forward to working with that ancient people and culture to advance the vision of a free, democratic, common and indivisible security community that stretches "from Vancouver to Vladivostok" and to contribute to the implementation of our consensual commitments in the three dimensions of our Organization (cf. Astana Commemorative Declaration, nos. 1 and 7).

3. *Politico-military dimension.* As far as the politico-military dimension of the OSCE is concerned, the Holy See has taken note with interest of the report of the Chairman of the Forum for Security Cooperation (FSC) on the activities carried out during 2012, complemented by progress reports on specific aspects of that activity. The results obtained in the area of development of projects dedicated to strengthening the security of excessive stockpiles of small arms and light weapons, as well as conventional munitions, is indeed praise-worthy.

The Holy See has also noted with satisfaction the initiatives that have re-focused attention on the "Code of Conduct on politico-military aspects of Security", in particular, those efforts intended to ensure a greater diffusion of this document, even outside the OSCE area. The "Code of Conduct" remains a precious instrument in ensuring transparency among participating States in their reciprocal relations, as well as in the respect for human rights of the members of the armed forces.

Equally valid are the initiatives concerning the contribution of the Forum to the implementation of the UNSCR No. 1540 on Non-Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction. The OSCE no doubt has something original and valuable to offer to the international community, but should never lose sight of the fact that its capabilities in this field are limited.

Unfortunately, progress has been slow on implementing the mandate of the Vilnius Ministerial Council on modernizing the "Vienna Document on Confidence and Security Building Measures". The recent adoption of a Decision on the notification of certain military activities is a step in the right direction.

In terms of the non-military aspects of security dealt with by the Security Committee, the Holy See values the efforts of the OSCE in strengthening co-ordination and coherence to address transnational threats, including the fight against terrorism, in combating the threat of illegal drugs and chemical precursors, in promoting a strategic framework for police-related activities and in furthering measures in the area of cyber security. These have inherent value as a contribution to the protection of the rights of human beings.

4. *Economic and environmental dimension.* This year the growing importance and relevance that participating States attach to the second or economic and environmental dimension has been revealed through substantive discussions, *inter alia*, on good governance and on the draft Declaration we have before us. For the Holy See, in order for governance to be “good”, it must take into account the common good, namely, the good of all people and of the whole person. Good governance should promote a “culture of life” for all people. Good government is that government in which political authorities do not forget or underestimate the moral dimension of political representation. Good governance has to follow natural law that is written in the heart of every human being. Pope Benedict XVI expressed this view very clearly during his recent visit to Lebanon: “In God’s plan, each person is unique and irreplaceable. A person comes into this world in a family, which is the first locus of humanization, and above all the first school of peace. To build peace, we need to look to the family, supporting it and facilitating its task, and in this way promoting an overall culture of life. The effectiveness of our commitment to peace depends on our understanding of human life. If we want peace, let us defend life! This approach leads us to reject not only war and terrorism, but every assault on innocent human life, on men and women as creatures willed by God. Wherever the truth of human nature is ignored or denied, it becomes impossible to respect that *grammar* which is the natural law inscribed in the human heart.”<sup>1</sup>

Corruption is a serious danger for good governance as it is a phenomenon that is not limited by politics or geography; the costs are borne by the citizens. Corruption is a cause of great concern today, in that it is also connected to drug-trafficking, to money-laundering, to the illegal trade of arms, to trafficking in human persons, and to other forms of criminality.

If corruption causes serious harm from a material point of view and places a costly burden on economic growth, still more harmful are its effects on immaterial goods, closely connected to the qualitative and human dimension of life in society. The fight against corruption requires a greater conviction, by means of the consensus given to moral evidence, and a greater awareness that this fight will provide important social advantages.

Ultimately, good governance is not only a technical issue, but more fundamentally a question of morality. Social and economic development must be measured and implemented with the human person at the center of all decisions. Good governance is promoted and corruption is curtailed when there is respect for fundamental freedoms and human rights, including the freedom of religion.

5. *Human dimension.* The OSCE has carved out for itself over the years impressive consensual commitments in favor of the defense of fundamental freedoms and human rights, the right to integral human development, and support for international law and global institutions. It is the dignity of the human person that motivates the desire of our Organization to work for the effective realization of all human rights.

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<sup>1</sup> Pope Benedict XVI: Address at the Meeting with Members of the Government, Institutions of the Republic, the Diplomatic Corps, Religious Leaders and Representatives of the World of Culture, Baabda Presidential Palace, 15 September 2012.

The Holy See strongly supports freedom of the media, freedom of expression and the free exchange of ideas. Freedom to seek and know the truth is a fundamental human right and freedom of expression is a cornerstone of democracy. At the same time, the Holy See also believes that ethical principles and norms relevant in other fields also apply to social communication. The right to freedom of expression carries with it corresponding responsibilities. Blessed Pope John Paul II wrote: “An authentically ethical approach to using the powerful communications media must be situated within the context of a mature exercise of freedom and responsibility, founded upon the supreme criteria of truth and justice.”<sup>2</sup>

The situation with regard to racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and intolerance has regrettably not improved; despite the lessons of history, these deplorable phenomena are still being reported today, at a time when migration and the general movement of peoples have continued to increase and the intermingling of cultures and multi-ethnicity have become a social fact. Strengthening OSCE efforts to combat racism and xenophobia will contribute to putting an end to these phenomena, thereby marking a fundamental step toward the affirmation of the universal value of human dignity and rights, in a horizon of respect and justice for persons and nations.

Among the fundamental freedoms, the right to freedom of religion figures prominently for the Holy See. The OSCE has always emphasized the positive contributions of religious communities to society. In this sense, the activity of the OSCE has ensured that public debate gives space to viewpoints inspired by a religious vision in all its dimensions, including ritual, worship, education, dissemination of information and the freedom to profess and choose one’s religion. “Religious freedom should be understood, then, not merely as immunity from coercion, but even more fundamentally as an ability to order one’s own choices in accordance with truth.”<sup>3</sup>

In fact, the rights associated with religion are all the more in need of protection if they are considered to clash with a prevailing secular ideology or with majority religious positions of an exclusive nature. The full guarantee of religious freedom cannot be limited only to the free exercise of worship, but has to give due consideration to the public dimension of religion, and hence to the possibility of believers playing their part in building the social order. It is inconceivable that believers should have to suppress a part of themselves, namely their faith, in order to be active citizens. “The contribution of religious communities to society”, the Holy Father wrote in his Message for the World Peace Day 2011, “is undeniable. Numerous charitable and cultural institutions testify to the constructive role played by believers in the life of society. More important still is religion’s ethical contribution in the political sphere. Religion should not be marginalized or prohibited, but seen as making an effective contribution to the promotion of the common good. In this context mention should be made of the religious dimension of culture, built up over centuries

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<sup>2</sup> Pope John Paul II: Apostolic Letter *The Rapid Development*, 24 January 2005.

<sup>3</sup> Pope Benedict XVI: Message for the Celebration of the World Peace Day 2011.

thanks to the social and especially ethical contributions of religion. This dimension is in no way discriminatory towards those who do not share its beliefs, but instead reinforces social cohesion, integration and solidarity.”

With the increase of religious intolerance throughout the world, it is well documented that Christians are among those most discriminated against, even within the OSCE region. In spite of the commitments undertaken by Participating States in the area of religious freedom, in some countries intolerant and even discriminatory laws, decisions and behavior, either by action or omission, which deny this freedom, still exist against the Catholic Church and other Christian communities. In particular, there are illegitimate interferences in the area of their organizational autonomy, preventing them from acting consistently with their own moral convictions. At times undue pressure is brought to bear upon people working in public administration in contrast with their freedom to behave in accordance with the dictates of their own conscience. At times educational programmes are deficient in duly respecting the identity and principles of Christians and of members of other religions, and there are clear signs of resistance against the recognition of religion’s public role. Nor are the media and public discourse always free from attitudes of intolerance and, sometimes, of actual denigration of Christians and members of other religions. Christians are frequently targets of prejudice and threats of violence, perhaps on account of their active participation in public conversations to form societies more respectful of human life and dignity. In light of the above, the OSCE should devote specific attention and develop effective proposals to fight intolerance and discrimination against Christians.

**6.** *Helsinki + 40.* The Holy See is convinced of the validity of the ideal embodied in the Helsinki Final Act nearly forty years ago. As the discussions within the framework of Helsinki + 40 continue over the next few years, it is my wish that the Helsinki Final Act, its vision and its hallmark of consensus, will help to ensure peace and security not only for all the years to come, but also geographically “from Vancouver to Vladivostok.”

**7.** *Conclusion.* In concluding, I would like to wish the incoming Ukrainian Chairmanship all the best as we work together to reach the goals identified in the Astana Commemorative Declaration – that common vision and those common values agreed upon and shared by all participating States of the OSCE.