

Second day of the Seventeenth Meeting
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MINISTERIAL DECLARATION
ON THE SIXTY-FIFTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE END OF
THE WORLD WAR II

The year 2010 marks the sixty-fifth anniversary of the end of the battles of the World War II, which caused unprecedented suffering and destruction. That war proved to be one of the greatest tragedies to afflict the peoples of Europe and the world. It lasted for six and a half years and took tens of millions of lives. The war brought about violations of human rights and freedoms as well as crimes against peace, war crimes and crimes against humanity.

We mourn all people who lost their lives, as victims of the war, the Holocaust, occupations and acts of repression. We honour veterans and all those who fought for the victory of humanity against fascism, dictatorship, oppression and aggression. Time will not diminish the meaning of their sacrifice and we will never forget their heroic exploits.

Resolved to prevent the recurrence of such a European and international catastrophe, our countries made a clear and unequivocal commitment to peace, security and democracy, in particular by founding the United Nations and through the establishment of regional organizations. Today we are proud of our common achievements and we hail the progress that has been made in the past sixty-five years in overcoming the tragic legacy of World War II, towards achieving global peace and security, reconciliation, international and regional co-operation and the promotion of democratic values, human rights and fundamental freedoms. We stress the important role that the CSCE and OSCE have played in this regard in the past decades.

Recalling the Helsinki Final Act, the Charter of Paris for a New Europe, the Charter for European Security, and other agreed OSCE documents we should not tolerate dividing lines and we shall spare no effort to avoid the emergence of new ones in the OSCE area, and to eliminate sources of hostility, tensions and confrontation. We reiterate our position that within the OSCE no State or group of States can consider any part of the OSCE area as its sphere of influence. We are determined to continue our collective efforts with a view of creating a common and indivisible space of security in the OSCE area, based on democracy, the rule of law, economic prosperity, social justice, and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the rights of persons belonging to national minorities. This remains our common purpose.

An honest and thorough research on the history of World War II contributes to reconciliation.

We have learned from history the danger of intolerance, discrimination, extremism and hatred on ethnic, racial and religious grounds. We are committed to combat these threats, including through the OSCE, and we reject any attempts to justify them.

We strongly condemn any denial of the Holocaust. We condemn all forms of ethnic cleansing. We confirm our adherence to the UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide adopted on 9 December 1948 and call on the participating States to take every possible action to ensure that attempts to commit genocide are prevented today and in the future. The perpetrators of such crimes should be brought to justice.

The lessons of the World War II are still of relevance today, when we need to unite our efforts and resources to address threats and challenges to our common security and stability and to defend our common principles. New times have brought new threats and challenges, one of the most dangerous of which is terrorism. We will fight this and other threats to security together, *inter alia*, through the OSCE.

We are convinced that the peaceful resolution of all existing conflicts, the observance of the norms of international law, the aims and principles of the UN Charter, the fulfilment of commitments contained in the Helsinki Final Act and other agreed OSCE documents are the best way to pay tribute to those who struggled for peace, freedom, democracy and human dignity, to commemorate all victims of World War II, to overcome the past, and to save present and future generations from the scourge of war and violence.