



Security Council

Seventy-first year

7635th meeting

Monday, 29 February 2016, 10 a.m.

New York

Provisional

President: Mr. Ramírez Carreño. (Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of))

Members:

Angola	Mr. Gaspar Martins
China	Mr. Liu Jieyi
Egypt	Mr. Aboulatta
France	Mr. Delattre
Japan	Mr. Yoshikawa
Malaysia	Mr. Ibrahim
New Zealand	Mrs. Schwalger
Russian Federation	Mr. Churkin
Senegal	Mr. Ciss
Spain	Mr. Gasso Matoses
Ukraine	Mr. Yelchenko
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Rycroft
United States of America	Mr. Pressman
Uruguay	Mr. Rosselli

Agenda

Briefing by the Chairperson-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe

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16-05404 (E)



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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Briefing by the Chairperson-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite His Excellency Mr. Frank-Walter Steinmeier, Chairperson-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Federal Republic of Germany, to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I now give the floor to Mr. Steinmeier.

Mr. Steinmeier: It is an honour for me to address the Security Council today as Chairperson-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the largest regional arrangement under Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations.

First of all, allow me to pay tribute to the late Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali. His "Agenda for Peace" (S/24111) not only marked a milestone for the international order after the Cold War. It was also Boutros-Ghali who recognized the important role of regional organizations in conflict settlement. He laid the foundation for the strong relationship between the United Nations and the OSCE — a relationship we would like to strengthen even further in 2016.

Nobody will deny that the challenges we are facing are enormous. As an European organization, I have to start with our own region. Violent crises and conflicts surround us, even on our own continent of Europe — and it is not only about Ukraine. In a very real sense, the Russian annexation of Crimea brought back to our agenda concerns about our common European security. At the same time, violence has spiked in regions of the Middle East and Northern Africa. Oppression, terror, religious radicalism and regional rivalries have led to immeasurable human suffering, especially in Syria. The brutal conflicts in the Middle East have also reached the European continent. Hundreds of thousands of people have been forced to flee their homes and are seeking shelter in Europe, many of them, as members know, in Germany.

All of those developments are challenging our common security more fundamentally than we long thought possible. Maintaining international peace and security, that is what the Charter of the United Nations provides for; while a new era of democracy, peace and unity in Europe was the vision in the Charter of Paris. However, this vision of a Europe whole and free has not yet materialized and, even worse, the principles of international law, as stipulated in the Charter of the United Nations and OSCE documents, seem to be coming under more and more pressure. How should we respond? What should our guiding principles be in these uncertain times?

First, let us face this world with a realistic eye — with the eye of today not of yesterday. We are not reliving the Cold War, and we should not talk as if we were. The world of today is different; its conflicts are of a new kind — more complex, with more actors and more conflicting interests — so yesterday's arguments are, from my point of view, not only inappropriate; they are counterproductive.

Secondly, I am convinced that the principles to which we have all agreed in the United Nations and the OSCE, such as the territorial integrity and sovereign equality of nations, must still form the bedrock of how we live together as nations. These commitments still form the basis for overcoming divisions, provided that all States muster the necessary political will.

Thirdly, we need strong multilateral organizations to help safeguard and implement these principles, to give us tools for conflict resolution, and to provide us with opportunities for debate to overcome our differences. The United Nations was created to do exactly that, and the same holds for the OSCE. I firmly believe that these two organizations continue to give us the best tools we have to shape the future of a rules-based international order and to prevent the fragility of our time from turning into perpetual disorder. That is why these two institutions are so important, particularly in our turbulent times. We want the OSCE to help us overcome the fragile security situation, in close cooperation with the United Nations. Let me highlight some focal areas of our chairmanship.

The first is Ukraine. The developments in and around Ukraine have shown how indispensable the OSCE is when it comes to unite our strength to maintain international peace and security, as the Charter of the United Nations says. Without the OSCE

and particularly the courageous men and women of the Special Monitoring Mission we would not have made the progress we have seen on military de-escalation and at least a partial withdrawal of weapons. However, we remain deeply concerned over the continuing violations of the ceasefire and the restrictions of access for the Mission. I strongly believe that implementing the Minsk agreements is the only way towards a sustainable political solution, and I call on both sides represented in the Council to live up to their responsibilities. Together with our French colleagues, we remain committed to supporting this process within the Normandy format, and I count on the support of the Council in this regard.

Secondly, I would like to highlight conflicts that are often referred to as “frozen” or “protracted”. I believe that we should not adopt this kind of fatalism. For many years, these conflicts have brought hardship to the people affected and stagnation to the regions involved. During our OSCE chairmanship, we want to make every effort to return to more constructive approaches, to stabilize ceasefires, and to rebuild trust by building confidence in small but tangible steps.

In the Nagorno Karabakh conflict, we are concerned about the high number of deadly incidents along the line of contact and the border between Armenia and Azerbaijan. We need to intensify efforts under the auspices of the OSCE Minsk Group. We must find ways to reduce the number of casualties quickly, and we should not be disheartened in seeking a lasting solution to the conflict on the basis of the principles of territorial integrity and the non-use of force.

In Georgia, we have seen at least some progress on practical cooperation between the sides. I want to commend the efforts undertaken by the United Nations, jointly with the OSCE and the European Union, in the Geneva international discussions. We want to underpin this momentum with more confidence-building measures and humanitarian action. We will also use the chairmanship to revive the 5+2 negotiations on the Transnistria conflict.

My third point concerns security- and confidence-building measures. Whether we look at Ukraine, Russia or Turkey, we are currently seeing increased military activities and a high risk of military incidents between OSCE member States. In these times, confidence- and security-building measures are more important than ever. One important element is the Vienna Document. The Ukraine conflict has revealed that it needs to be

updated substantially. Progress will be difficult, of course, when confidence is low, but I am convinced that the proposals we have made would lead to better crisis prevention and risk reduction. On the basis of these confidence-building measures, I do hope that we will eventually return to a broader dialogue on European security. We should adhere to the long-term vision of renewed arms control and cooperative security in Europe.

The OSCE and the United Nations share the task of preventing armed conflicts. I believe we should make every effort to strengthen OSCE capabilities in this field, from early warning to crisis management to post-conflict rehabilitation. We will also address the role of women in conflict management and the protection of women in violent conflicts, in line with resolution 1325 (2000). The experience of the United Nations in all these areas can enrich this process. I believe that we are more likely to be successful if we work closely together and combine our toolboxes.

The same is true when it comes to addressing the many other global challenges we face, from terrorism and extremism to organized crime. I believe that the pressing issue of migration should figure more prominently on our agenda. I welcome the Secretary-General’s initiative to organize a global summit on migration in September. The OSCE has a lot of expertise in this field, from human rights standards and best practices in labour migration to combatting human trafficking. That is why we want to discuss how the OSCE can contribute to the international efforts, in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (General Assembly resolution 70/1).

Human rights and fundamental freedoms are top priorities of our chairmanship. I believe that we need to intensify the fight against discrimination, racism, xenophobia and intolerance throughout Europe, including in my own country. In Germany, people’s overwhelming readiness to help arriving refugees has recently been overshadowed by xenophobic assaults. These are despicable acts that we must not and will not tolerate.

Finally, I would like to highlight the fact that security within the OSCE area is intrinsically tied to the security of its neighbours. The OSCE is a unique organization, but my hope is that its principles can provide a glimmer of hope to other regions, particularly in the Middle East. Let us remember that the road to

Helsinki began when the Cold War was at its coldest. At the start of the negotiations, who would have dared to hope that at the end of it, the Berlin Wall would fall?

Of course, one cannot transfer a security architecture to another region. But perhaps our experiences can highlight useful principles and processes, and maybe they can encourage the parties in the Middle East to live up to their responsibility and explore new paths to political settlements. This is a discussion that we started at the OSCE conference in Amman last year and on which we would like to build.

Germany is fully aware of the responsibility attached to assuming the OSCE chairmanship in these turbulent times. I am convinced that we have to remain firm with respect to our principles. At the same time, I believe that we need to promote dialogue and a cooperative approach so as to overcome our differences and put us back on track towards restored security.

We should remind ourselves of the spirit of Helsinki: persistent dialogue and a cooperative approach can pay off in the end. This very hope is expressed in our motto for 2016: “Renewing dialogue, rebuilding trust and restoring security”. This embraces the spirit of the United Nations Charter. Rebuilding trust will not be easy, and there is no quick fix. But if we want to be able to look future generations in the eye and say that we did everything possible to return to peace in Europe, we have to work on it together, in the OSCE and in the United Nations.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Mr. Steinmeier for his briefing.

I shall now give the floor to the members of the Security Council.

Mr. Delattre (France) (*spoke in French*): I should like to welcome the presence in the Council today of His Excellency Mr. Frank-Walter Steinmeier, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Germany, and to thank him for his particularly enlightening statement. On behalf of my country, I should like also warmly to congratulate Germany on its assumption of the chairmanship of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) this year. Of course, we intend to closely cooperate, with full confidence, with our German friends in this body in the months to come. They know that they can count on our full support in the implementation of their programme of work, which is rightly focused on the issues he mentioned, including

the relaunching of dialogue, the rebuilding of trust and the restoration of security.

I wish to touch on two points: the central role of the OSCE in our efforts to put an end to the Ukrainian crisis, and the priority challenges on which the OSCE should, in a more general manner, be concentrating its efforts.

The crisis unfolding today in eastern Ukraine is one of the most serious and dangerous violations of the founding principles of the OSCE, as adopted in Helsinki more than 40 years ago. It is therefore fitting that this issue has dominated the agenda of the organization for more than two years now. The OSCE has risen to the challenge and shouldered its responsibilities by deploying swiftly a Special Monitoring Mission and playing a central role in the implementation of the Minsk agreements. The OSCE must continue to play this core role in the context of the international efforts aimed at resolving the crisis. Our goal here remains a return of control for Ukraine across its internationally recognized borders, which includes reinstating its authority over Crimea. Our position on this issue, which is in keeping with international law, will not change.

We welcome the fact that the mandate of the Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine was extended several days ago for an additional year upon the initiative of the German chairmanship. Germany’s chairmanship means that we can strengthen the links between the various crisis-management tools available, including the Normandy format, which is the priority negotiation format for parties, and the OSCE, which is providing follow-up on the ground and mediation on a daily basis.

For France, resolving the Ukrainian crisis remains a priority. We are determined to continue our efforts in the Normandy format to ensure the full implementation of the Minsk agreements, which represents the only possible framework to achieve a peaceful settlement. This is one of the messages that Minister Steinmeier conveyed, alongside his French counterpart, during their joint visit to Kyiv last week. In terms of content, our position is clear: we are deeply worried about the ongoing violations of the ceasefire, whose number has increased in recent weeks, and we deplore the piecemeal application of the Minsk agreements on the ground.

The Minsk agreements are an international commitment whose provisions must be implemented by all parties. This includes the effective implementation of the ceasefire, which is the only possible basis for

moving forward, as well as the implementation of the other measures planned for by the Minsk framework, namely, the adoption of a constitutional reform on decentralization and a special electoral law for Donbas, given the fact that the definition of a political horizon is the only way to ensure that the security situation remains stable.

All of these questions will be on the agenda of the next ministerial meeting in the Normandy format, to be held on Thursday in Paris. This will be a crucial time with respect to our mediation and to the conflict, and all parties must shoulder their responsibilities. We call upon other members of the Council to urgently convey this message. In the meantime, more generally, it is vital that the Special Monitoring Mission of the OSCE be in a position to fully and without hindrance discharge its mandate. We once again call for respect of the freedom of movement of the monitors and firmly condemn any violation of that principle, be it through intimidation, threats or prohibition of access to certain areas. We should also think about how to give the organization the ability to better monitor the border between Russia and Ukraine and to set up a new advance presence in areas currently under separatist control. The commitment of the OSCE to ensuring security for local elections in Donbas will also be necessary, on the basis of arrangements yet to be determined.

Beyond Ukraine, the OSCE remains a key instrument for promoting peace and security in Europe in a context characterized by a broad spectrum of threats. This situation should encourage its 57 members to give up political posturing and embrace once again the Helsinki spirit of which Minister Steinmeier just spoke, which enabled a shared vision of security in Europe and which was reiterated in the 2010 Astana commemorative declaration of Heads of State and Government, entitled "Towards a security community", based on the three well-known dimensions on which the organization focuses.

In this context, we believe that the work of the OSCE must today emphasize the following issues in particular.

First, let me touch on the settlement of regional conflicts. Beyond the Ukrainian crisis, we cannot accept the continued existence of frozen conflicts throughout Europe, be it in Nagorno Karabakh, Transdniestria or Georgia, which was mentioned earlier. We share the belief of the German chairmanship that the OSCE's

role is key in all of these situations, within established mediation formats, so as to promote dialogue and re-establish confidence.

I turn now to the issue of bolstering the OSCE's capacities in the cycle of conflict. Conflict prevention is an issue on which we deem it not only possible but also urgent to make headway together. Here we welcome the decision of the German chairmanship to attach priority importance to arms control and the adoption of confidence-building measures during this year, in which important timelines are coming up with respect to the Vienna Document and the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe.

With respect to upholding the vital importance of the democracy and human rights pillar in the work of the OSCE, although a multidimensional approach has always been at the heart of the OSCE's work, we are nevertheless concerned at the increasing tendency on the part of certain members to politicize or even reject consideration of issues related to the human dimension. The approach taken by the German chairmanship of relaunching work in this area while focusing on issues such as combating discrimination, racism, xenophobia and intolerance is welcome, on the understanding that such work cannot overshadow the efforts that must be made in the area of democracy and human rights.

With regard to developing the central role of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe to certain emerging challenges — I am thinking in particular about migration, combatting radicalization and even climate change — it is important with all of those issues, which are so important for European security, that the OSCE work towards specific responses beyond public posturing. We fully support the desire of the German chairmanship to encourage the Organization to focus on those areas of expertise, such as in the fight against human trafficking in the context of migration, for example. Particular attention should be paid to the impact of climate change on security. We think that would be quite timely, following the Paris agreement.

I conclude my statement by recalling the common ground that exists between the activities of the OSCE and the United Nations. Whether it be in the field or in their respective missions in the Balkans, the Caucasus or Central Asia, they must always act in an integrated manner. There is also common ground in terms of principles with the defence of a common approach that

encompasses security, development and human rights. France is convinced that the founding principles of the OSCE remain more relevant than ever to guarantee security in Europe. Unlike those who believe today that there is a need to abandon or change such principles, we think that it important to collectively mobilize to ensure those principles are upheld.

Once again, on behalf of my country I would like to wish Germany every success as it assumes the chairmanship and pledge France's resolve to support its programme of work at the head of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe.

Mr. Yoshikawa (Japan) (*spoke in Spanish*): I am honoured to take the floor to speak on the last day of Venezuela's presidency of the Council.

(*spoke in English*)

I would first like to welcome the Foreign Minister of Germany, Mr. Frank-Walter Steinmeier, to the Security Council. I thank him for his comprehensive briefing on the priorities of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) in 2016 in his capacity as its Chairperson-in-Office.

Japan became the first OSCE partner for cooperation almost 25 years ago, in 1992. Since then, Japan has always participated in OSCE summits and ministerial councils at a high level. We already hosted four Japan-OSCE conferences and we are convinced that Asia and Europe have a lot to learn from each other. With the members of the OSCE, Japan shares fundamental values, such as freedom, democracy and basic human rights. Japan will continue to be an active partner with the OSCE.

I wish to touch upon the situation in and around Ukraine, which Minister Steinmeier referred to. First of all, we will not accept any unilateral attempts to change the status quo in Ukraine or any other country or region in the world. The sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine must be respected. We commend the dedicated efforts made thus far by the OSCE and its Chairperson-in-Office on Ukrainian issues. The role played by the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission (SMM) continues to be critical. In order to support this Mission, Japan has contributed €2 million and has been sending a regional expert to the SMM since last August. We are concerned that the SMM continues to report systematic disruption of access to certain areas. Japan

would like to stress that SMM observers must be given full and unrestricted access to the entire conflict zone.

This month marks the one-year anniversary of the signing of the package of measures for the implementation of the Minsk agreements. However, the situation in Ukraine is far from a final resolution. It is unfortunate that the number of violations of ceasefire agreements reported by the SMM has increased recently. The Minsk agreements are the only guidelines for the improvement of the situation in Ukraine. Japan urges all parties to fully and promptly implement the Minsk agreements.

Counter-terrorism is one of the areas in which the OSCE is playing an important role. We believe that the strengthening of border control is among the most effective counter-terrorism measures. That is why Japan has been financially supporting the OSCE Border Management Staff College since 2013. I wish to add that Japan values cooperation between the OSCE and the United Nations under the framework of Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations.

Finally, I wish Minister Steinmeier every success during his chairmanship and assure him of Japan's support to him and to the OSCE.

Mr. Rosselli (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to begin by recognizing the presence in the Chamber of, and express my gratitude to, the Chairperson-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), Minister for Foreign Affairs of Germany, Mr. Frank-Walter Steinmeier.

For Uruguay, cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations under Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations is an essential component of the structure of international relations. As a member of strong regional organizations that have long been in existence, such as the Organization of American States and the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), Uruguay believes that the role played by regional organizations is very important. We believe that this role will again be a central focus, for example in the work that the Organization will be doing to support the peacebuilding process in Colombia, specifically with the participation in that process by the States members of CELAC.

We greatly appreciate the value of the role played by the OSCE as a platform for dialogue in a very vast region. In that region, issues related to security, early

warnings, the settlement of conflicts, the management of crises and post-conflict rehabilitation are all of crucial importance. In general terms, we share the values, principles and objectives of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. In particular, we value its contribution on the ground to addressing the various areas of conflict that fall within its remit. We believe that the United Nations and the OSCE share work in a number of similar areas and that cooperation between the two entities should always be a part of the principles of both organizations.

Finally, I would like to firmly reaffirm that Uruguay understands that the principle of the territorial integrity of States is a fundamental pillar in international relations.

Mr. Aboulatta (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like to begin by congratulating the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Germany, Mr. Frank-Walter Steinmeier, on his assumption of the chairmanship of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and by thanking him for his very complete briefing on the priorities of the OSCE for this year. I would also like to thank him for his comments with regard to former Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali and for his recognition of Mr. Boutros-Ghali's efforts to realize peace in the wake of the Cold War.

We have often insisted on the importance of cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations with regard to the maintenance of international peace and security, in accordance with Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations. In that regard, we place high value and importance on the efforts of the OSCE to re-establish stability in conflict zones in Europe and in Asia. I would cite, in particular, the conflicts in Nagorno Karabakh, Ukraine and elsewhere.

Progress has been made as a result of OSCE efforts in the areas of preventive diplomacy, mediation and good offices, and we would encourage the OSCE to continue its efforts. We believe that the role of the OSCE should be complementary to that of the United Nations, and that the latter should contribute to strengthening OSCE efforts undertaken within the framework of its mandate. We also support the strengthening of dialogue and cooperation with our Mediterranean partners in the light of the close link between the countries of the Mediterranean and the European continent. I would cite in particular such issues as the Syrian crisis, the need to

re-establish stability in Libya, and the fight against the terrorism and extremism that threaten the aspirations of the peoples of the region.

Moreover, it is necessary to strengthen dialogue among civilizations and religions, and to address issues related to migration, the protection of refugees and the trafficking of human beings in the Mediterranean region. In that context, we particularly appreciate the efforts of the OSCE to pool international efforts with a view to reaching a sustainable solution in Ukraine, in accordance with the Minsk agreements. We believe that those agreements provide the best framework within which to achieve a sustainable peace. In that context, the implementation of the ceasefire is particularly important, as are the necessary constitutional reforms and the organization of elections in the Donbas region. And let us not forget the need to respond to the humanitarian consequences of the conflict in cooperation with all stakeholders, without exception. Egypt welcomes the decline in hostile acts, which helps to provide conditions that are favourable to peace and stability. It is essential that all parties honour their commitments in accordance with the Minsk agreements, and we urge them to engage in dialogue and to seek a peaceful resolution to the conflict that takes into consideration the aspiration of their peoples.

Finally, we would be extremely pleased to see strengthened cooperation with the OSCE in order to arrive at a common vision on a number of issues, including Islamophobia in Europe, dialogue among civilizations and religions, as well as the combat against terrorism and extremism. The latter two constitute two of the greatest security threats we face today. We call for strengthened joint efforts that include the participation of all parties and organizations concerned, including the OSCE, in order to eradicate terrorism. Those efforts should be carried out using a comprehensive approach that is not limited to only security and military solutions, but that includes cultural and economic aspects as well. That will help to improve the lives of all the populations in the region. In that vein, Egypt, which is a Mediterranean partner, will spare no effort to achieve our shared goals.

Mr. Ibrahim (Malaysia): At the outset, I join my other colleagues in congratulating Mr. Frank-Walter Steinmeier, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Germany, on his assumption of the position of Chairperson-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) for 2016, and welcome him to the

Security Council. My delegation is grateful for his briefing, which clearly outlined the priorities of the OSCE under Germany's chairmanship.

Malaysia welcomes the reaffirmation by the Chairperson-in-Office to continue the close cooperation between the OSCE and the United Nations. Over the years, the OSCE has proven its relevance and resilience as the world's largest regional security organization. Its inclusive and cooperative nature is its key strength in responding to various security threats and challenges in the Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian regions. We greatly value its contribution and commend the holistic approach of the OSCE to dealing with wide-ranging security challenges, including conflict prevention, conflict management, combating terrorism, arms control and ensuring respect for human rights.

The significant role of the OSCE was thrust into the limelight with the crisis in Ukraine. The OSCE's engagement in Ukraine through its Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine, its participation in the Trilateral Contact Group, and the observer mission at the Russian checkpoints Gukovo and Donetsk, deserve the Council's strong support. We acknowledge the significant progress made in Ukraine relating to military de-escalation and the withdrawal of weapons. However, we remain deeply concerned that the agreed ceasefire remains fragile and that the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission still does not have access to the entire conflict zone, particularly the rebel-held areas.

We strongly urge all relevant parties to abide by the obligations laid down by the package of measures for the implementation of the Minsk agreements last year, which was endorsed by the Council in resolution 2202 (2015). We wish to see the full cooperation of all parties with the OSCE to enable it to carry out its mandate. Malaysia also calls on the parties to intensify efforts to implement outstanding provisions of the package of measures, including releasing all hostages, withdrawing foreign troops and weapons, allowing humanitarian access, and organizing local elections in the conflict areas.

I wish to take this opportunity to commend the role played by the OSCE in the aftermath of the downing of flight MH-17 in eastern Ukraine, including in facilitating the recovery and investigation efforts despite the challenging security situation on the ground.

With respect to the various frozen conflicts, including in Central Asia, the Southern Caucasus

and Moldova, we hope that the focus on dialogue, confidence-building measures and mediation by the German chairmanship will provide new impetus towards resolving the conflicts, in line with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, various United Nations resolutions, as well as the Helsinki Final Act. We reiterate the need for the conflicting parties to respect the principles of territorial integrity and sovereignty, and the inadmissibility of the use of force for the acquisition of territory, and to focus on the de-escalation of conflict and peaceful settlement of disputes.

Malaysia recognizes and fully supports the stabilizing role played by the OSCE in the Western Balkans, including its missions in Bosnia and Herzegovina and in Kosovo. The OSCE has been vital in building institutions and promoting reconciliation in the region, and has brought about great strides in political, judiciary, electoral, economic and social reforms in post-conflict societies. I wish to also highlight and welcome the conference organized by the OSCE earlier this month in Vienna to identify strategies to counter intolerance against Muslims in the OSCE regions. We commend the priority accorded by the OSCE to address discrimination, racism and xenophobia, particularly in view of the rising sentiment of Islamophobia in the OSCE regions.

In conclusion, Malaysia reiterates its support for the OSCE and the priorities set out by the Chairperson-in-Office to renew dialogue, rebuild trust, and restore security in the region. We wish Germany success for its chairmanship, and we reaffirm our continued commitment to cooperate closely with the OSCE in maintaining peace and security in the region, under Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations.

Mr. Rycroft (United Kingdom): I thank Foreign Minister Steinmeier for his briefing. We look forward to his return to the Security Council in his capacity as Minister for Foreign Affairs of Germany, permanently, before too long. In the meantime, he has our full support, both in Vienna and here in New York, in taking forward the priorities of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) this year.

Like the United Nations, the OSCE was founded on the principles of dialogue and respect for peace and stability. Together, the two organizations are therefore at the forefront of the rules-based international system. Sadly, as the Council well knows, that system is

seldom left unchallenged, so it is incumbent upon both organizations to work closely together to advance peace and security, and in doing so to uphold the Charter of the United Nations and the Helsinki principles. That strong cooperation is most clearly seen in our response to the continuing crisis in Ukraine. At the outset, I wish to reaffirm the United Kingdom's full support for Ukraine's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity and our commitment to the return of Crimea to its rightful place as part of Ukraine. I would also like to take this opportunity to express the United Kingdom's gratitude for the leading role played by Germany, and by the German OSCE chairmanship, in the Normandy group, and in support of the Special Monitoring Mission and the Trilateral Contact Group.

One year since our previous meeting on the OSCE (see S/PV.7391), can we really say that the overall situation has changed for the better in the east of Ukraine? That meeting focused on the regular breaches of the ceasefire, the use of heavy weapons and the continued presence of convoys crossing the international border. To that list one can now add the unacceptable aggression directed against OSCE monitors. I am saddened and deeply worried to say that, one year later, we seem no closer to a resolution of the crisis. Since the crisis began, over 9,000 people have lost their lives, and over 3 million are now in need of humanitarian assistance. It is clear that that toll will only continue to grow unless a truly sustainable ceasefire is put in place and all sides meet their Minsk commitments in full. To that end, three clear steps must be taken.

First, it is imperative that the Monitoring Mission, ably directed by Ambassador Apakan, be permitted to carry out its mandate in full. The threats and aggressive behaviour towards monitors must end. The Mission must have unrestricted access to all of Ukraine, especially those parts of the border with Russia not under Ukraine's control. The Russian Federation should use its influence on the separatists to ensure that that happens without delay, as they it is obliged to do.

Secondly, while there have been some welcome exchanges of prisoners over the last year, at least 134 Ukrainian prisoners remain in detention. We again call on Russia to release all illegally detained Ukrainian citizens, including those held in Russia and in the illegally annexed Crimean peninsula. Those include Nadiya Savchenko and Oleg Sentsov. We also reiterate that all hostages and illegally detained persons related

to the crisis in and around Ukraine must be released, as stipulated under the Minsk agreements.

Thirdly, even more important, what is most needed is a truly sustainable ceasefire and genuine political will to restore Ukrainian sovereignty. The Russian Federation must demonstrate that will and live up to its international commitments. It must withdraw its weapons and personnel and use its considerable influence over the separatists to bring an end to the crisis and prevent the deaths of more people. That is the best way to end the fear and suffering of ordinary people in eastern Ukraine and to allow the Ukrainian Government to focus on much-needed programmes of governance and reform.

Until those steps are taken, we will be working with our European Union partners to ensure that sanctions remain in place. The onus is on Russia to demonstrate a clear commitment to act in line with the principles that guide the OSCE, the Council and other international organizations.

Finally, beyond Ukraine, we in the Security Council should not lose sight of the need to work closely with the German OSCE chairmanship to resolve other issues affecting the region. Those include protecting fundamental freedoms, which continue to come under growing pressure in some OSCE States, addressing the need for greater military transparency and tackling the protracted conflicts that continue to blight the lives of people across the OSCE region, most notably in Georgia. We need dialogue based on respect for, and the implementation of, commitments. Without that we face continuing deadlock, which is damaging and debilitating to all sides. Russian actions in Ukraine cast a shadow over efforts to build confidence and security across OSCE States. We must lift that shadow and, as Foreign Minister Steinmeier said, rebuild trust, renew dialogue and restore security.

Mr. Gaspar Martins (Angola): We welcome His Excellency Mr. Frank-Walter Steinmeier, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Germany, and thank him for the very clear and comprehensive briefing delivered to the Security Council this morning in his role as Chairperson-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).

The priorities set for the German chairmanship — renewing dialogue, rebuilding trust and restoring security — address fundamental concerns of international life and our quest for peace and security.

Since its inception, the OSCE's work has been a relevant factor in that endeavour, and we commend its tangible contribution to international peace and security, its upholding of the purposes and principles of the United Nations and its cooperation under Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations. During the 40 years of its existence, the OSCE's agenda has been effectively aligned with the three pillars of the United Nations, that is, peace and security, human rights and development.

Angola needs a Europe in peace, marked by stability and growing economies. We therefore attach great relevance to the programme set by the German chairmanship of the OSCE, focused on the fight against threats such as terrorism, radicalism, drug trafficking, as well as on countering the abuse of cyberspace, by addressing youth radicalization through a comprehensive approach to security and the efforts that it has been deploying to address today's growing security challenges. Angola supports and appreciates the OSCE's outstanding role in that regard.

In addition, the organization's efforts to strengthen dialogue and cooperation in areas such as arms control are of relevance, as are initiatives aimed at managing cross-border movements and the social and political impact of migration, based on the organization's commitment to human rights and the promotion of tolerance and non-discrimination, which are solid foundations for lasting solutions to the critical problems affecting the international community. We welcome the German chairmanship's objective of holding a conference on those issues later this year in Berlin.

With regard to specific country situations, we praise the OSCE's active support to the current negotiations and mechanisms for solving conflicts in Nagorno Karabakh and to the Transnistria talks on Georgia, as well as its fundamental role in the stabilization of Kosovo and in monitoring the Minsk agreement on eastern Ukraine.

Angola values with great appreciation the contribution of regional and subregional organizations to the maintenance of international peace and security. They play a key role in strengthening the multilateral system and complement the work of the United Nations through the specific knowledge of their respective regions, particularly with regard to the root causes of conflict.

Finally, we would like to stress the importance of dialogue between the Security Council and the OSCE, as well as with other international, regional

and subregional organizations, in prevention and crisis management and tackling issues that are threats to regional peace and stability in Europe.

Angola wishes the German chairmanship great success and thanks the Chairperson-in-Office for coming to New York.

Mrs. Schwalger (New Zealand): We appreciate the opportunity to hear directly from Minister Steinmeier on the priorities that Germany will pursue as Chairperson-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). We welcome in particular the Chairperson's goal of strengthening OSCE capacities in all aspects of conflict, from early warning and prevention to ending conflict and restoring lasting peace. This aligns closely with the Council's mandate, including areas where it needs to improve, especially in terms of conflict prevention.

New Zealand is a strong advocate of the positive role of regional organizations in addressing conflict. Experience in our region has shown that regional organizations can be highly effective and support the United Nations efforts to prevent conflict and restore stability. It is therefore not surprising that on many occasions we have highlighted the need for enhanced cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations.

The OSCE is no exception. It has a long history of defusing conflict and promoting human rights and democratic principles, and it continues to demonstrate its relevance today in a number of conflict zones and across a wide array of security issues, all of which complement the Council's mandate of maintaining international peace and security. With respect to territorial disputes, the OSCE is carrying out important work to reduce tensions and engage parties in dialogue. We also welcome its programmes aimed at countering other threats to security, such as violent extremism, radicalization and human trafficking.

The OSCE's stature and reputation mean that it is often the best suited to tackle security challenges or support conflict resolution in its region. We applaud the OSCE's continuing and important role in maintaining security in many parts of Europe that have been and continue to be troubled by conflict, as outlined by Minister Steinmeier this morning. This is most obviously evident in Ukraine, where the parties have bestowed particular and difficult roles on the OSCE to monitor and verify compliance with the terms of the

Minsk agreements. The Minsk agreements remain the best path to a durable peace. This was recognized by the Council, which endorsed the package of measures for implementing the Minsk agreements and the OSCE's important role in monitoring them when it adopted resolution 2202 (2015) last February.

Yet on almost all counts, implementation by the parties is far from perfect. Lives continue to be lost, the humanitarian situation is poor and the availability of weapons presents the ongoing risk of a resumption of conflict. As we have heard today, the OSCE reports almost daily that its monitors are encountering freedom-of-movement restrictions, mostly in separatist-controlled areas. We commend the OSCE monitors for their work under challenging circumstances, and call on all parties to ensure their safety and security at all times. OSCE monitors must be allowed to access all areas necessary to verify a ceasefire and the withdrawal of proscribed weapons. We repeat our call on Russia to use its influence over the separatists to ensure that they comply with all aspects of the Minsk agreements.

The parties to the Minsk agreements decided that local elections in eastern Ukraine would be held in accordance with OSCE standards and monitored by the OSCE. These elections will need to take place in a safe and stable environment, which is another reason why security aspects of the Minsk agreements need to be implemented urgently.

As Foreign Minister Steinmeier noted, the United Nations and the OSCE share many common goals and responsibilities. As others have mentioned here today, we hope that the two organizations can strengthen their cooperation to mutually reinforce their efforts to maintain peace and security.

Mr. Liu Jieyi (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): Today is the last day of February. China thanks Venezuela, in its capacity as Council president this month, for leading the Council to conduct its work efficiently and practically. I also wish Angola every success in its Council presidency in March.

I thank you, Sir, for convening today's open meeting. I welcome Foreign Minister Steinmeier of Germany to today's meeting in his capacity as Chairperson-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). I listened carefully to his briefing.

In recent years, the OSCE has made positive efforts in preventive diplomacy, enhancing security and mutual confidence, and mediating regional disputes. China commends the OSCE for its efforts and welcomes the priorities defined by the German chairmanship for enhancing dialogue, rebuilding mutual trust and restoring security. We hope that the OSCE shall continue to play its constructive role in maintaining regional peace, security and stability.

China consistently advocates for political solutions to regional hotspot issues through dialogue and negotiation, and supports regional and subregional organizations in conducting preventive diplomacy, defusing differences and settling conflicts by peaceful means so as to contribute to the promotion of regional peace and security. The activities of regional organizations should conform to the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations, in particular the principle of respect for the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of all countries.

The Security Council and regional and subregional organizations have their respective advantages in maintaining international peace and security. The United Nations and the Security Council should, in accordance with the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations, continue to deepen cooperation with regional and subregional organizations so as to be mutually complementary in their efforts to jointly uphold the Charter and the basic principles guiding international relations. The OSCE is an important partner of the United Nations. We support the Security Council's engagement in efficient and practical cooperation with the OSCE in maintaining regional peace and security.

The overall situation in eastern Ukraine is relatively calm. All relevant parties, including the OSCE, have made positive efforts in this process. A comprehensive settlement of the Ukraine issue must follow the general direction of a political solution, taking fully into account the legitimate rights, interests and demands of all regions and ethnic groups within Ukraine, while paying due attention to the legitimate concerns of all relevant parties. China supports all relevant parties in fully implementing the Minsk agreement, as called for in resolution 2202 (2015), and in continuously advancing a political solution to the Ukraine issue. The international community should enable the Normandy and Minsk mediation mechanisms to play their full

roles and jointly advance the early achievement of peace, calm, stability and development in Ukraine.

Mr. Churkin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We are pleased to welcome to the Security Council the Vice-Chancellor and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Germany, Frank-Walter Steinmeier, in his capacity as Chairperson-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). We thank him for his substantive briefing.

We have consistently stood for developing and improving cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional mechanisms on the basis of the Charter of the United Nations, first and foremost Chapter VIII. It is on this very foundation that cooperation between the United Nations and the OSCE should be based. Cooperation between the two organizations is regular and multilateral in nature, covering all dimensions of security, as well as cross-dimensional issues.

We share the emphasis of the German chairmanship on the “all-weather” dialogue, for which the OSCE has a solid foundation in the form of the genuine equality of all States parties and a broad-based agenda, which reflects the interests of all. As is well known, in the OSCE not a single State or bloc of States can freeze matters of common interest and of paramount importance for European security. There are collective means of crisis management, which enjoy high credibility in the region. That must remain the OSCE’s philosophy of dialogue in the future.

The OSCE has entered into its fifth decade of existence, having accumulated considerable international experience and created its own mechanisms. Unfortunately, the ideals that were at the heart of the creation of the organization have not always been implemented in practice, nor has cooperation between States become a key rallying factor. Sometimes, one has the impression that geopolitical egoism or a narrowness of political thinking has the upper hand.

Who would have thought that in the heart of Europe there could have been such a violent armed coup d’état as took place in Ukraine, and even with the support of some members of the OSCE? In that context, the people of Crimea were free to decide to join Russia. The instruments that were proposed by the OSCE to settle the crisis, including the Swiss road map, remained on the table, first and foremost due to Kyiv’s lack of desire to seek a solution based on an inclusive dialogue to

solve the conflict with different regions and to a lack of good political leadership. The agenda was imposed by radicals. That is the reason not only for the complete disarray in the economic and political life of Ukraine, but also of Kyiv’s failure to implement a number of key provisions of the package of measures agreed upon in Minsk by the leaders of Normandy quartet and endorsed in resolution 2202 (2015).

We believe that one of the primary tasks for the German chairmanship of the OSCE should be the full implementation of the package of measures. In that regard, it is quite convenient that Germany is also an active member of Normandy format, and indeed, thanks to its international prestige, Germany has given the package of measures more weight. Nevertheless, the OSCE has neither the political nor the moral right to lose sight of the investigation of the tragedy on the Maidan in February 2014 and in Odessa on 2 May 2014.

We called attention to the brash assertion of certain participants at the events in the Maidan, recently widely publicized in Ukraine, who openly acknowledged that they were the instigators of killings of law enforcement officers, who, unarmed, were ensuring public order in the capital of Ukraine in those days. No charges have been levied against them, nor are investigations under way. We cannot indulge in their impunity.

We think that the current format of cooperation between the United Nations and the OSCE in Ukraine is sufficient. We base this on the fact that the parties themselves have the primary responsibility for implementing the practical solutions to stabilize the situation — demining, rehabilitation of infrastructure, exchange of prisoners and so on. It is important to recall the dangers of attempts to blur or reinterpret the existing mechanisms, such as the Contact Group or the Normandy format, and to launch new initiatives that only distract us from the necessity to fully implement the package of measures.

On the whole, we support the activities of the OSCE Monitoring Mission in Ukraine. We believe that monitors could pay more attention to monitoring on the territory under the control of the Ukrainian army — in particular the Dnepropetrovsk, Kharkov and Zaporozhye regions, where armaments and equipment are being accumulated — and provide more complete reporting on their activities. However, despite those criticisms, the OSCE Monitoring Mission in Ukraine is

the only mechanism that can work with all parties to the conflict: Kyiv and Donetsk and Luhansk.

It is of the utmost importance that the monitoring activities be carried out in a manner that is equal on both sides of the line of contact, and not concentrated mainly in the territories under the control of the militias. Due to such distortions, mistrust arises on the part of Luhansk and Donetsk, which in particular is then reflected in the problems of access by monitors to sites in the republics. We would like to note that Monitoring Mission staff regularly visit districts along the Ukrainian-Russian border, and nothing suspicious has been documented in their reports.

An important element in establishing a global unifying agenda is strengthening the OSCE as a format for dialogue and cooperation with regard to transnational threats and challenges. We support the efforts of the German chairmanship in that regard. It would be advisable to conduct a joint assessment of threats to common security. We hope that documents already adopted by the United Nations and the OSCE on the fight against terrorism and drug trafficking will provide more results. We note the contribution of Berlin to the preliminary agreement on 12 February in Vienna of the additional list of confidence-building measures in the use of information and computer technologies. We believe that the OSCE can contribute to the response to the migration crisis, which requires in-depth discussion.

On the military-political front, a common understanding of shared goals in arms control and confidence-building measures is needed. But for this one needs to overcome the logic of containment, a mode of thinking again prevailing among NATO strategists.

We recognize the relevance of including an item on sustainable connectivity on the agenda of economic and environmental baskets. Harmonizing and calibrating the integration processes in Europe and Eurasia are designed to reduce the potential for conflict on the continent. We think that the upcoming business conference in Berlin on economic connectivity on 18 and 19 May will allow progress on that path.

The humanitarian dimension of the OSCE should be depoliticized, cleansed of double standards. Russian priorities in that regard are well-known — the protection of universal traditional values; countering aggressive nationalism, radicalism and neo-Nazism; preventing attempts to falsify the history of the Second

World War; the fight against ethnic and religious intolerance, including against Christians; and the protection of journalists working in conflict zones. Ensuring the rights of children and the disabled, non-intervention in private life and agreement on common rules for monitoring elections are among other topics that the OSCE should pay more attention to. The whole spectrum of social, economic and cultural rights require equal attention.

Mr. Ciss (Senegal) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, I would like to welcome the convening of this Security Council meeting devoted to the briefing by the Chairperson-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), which is the product of the vision and the commitment of 57 countries from Europe, North America and Asia for peace through cooperation. On this important occasion, my delegation also welcomes the presence among us of Mr. Frank-Walter Steinmeier, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Germany in his capacity as the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office. I thank him for his briefing.

As a follow-up to the open debate (see S/PV.7621) on respect for the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations as a key element for the maintenance of peace, we are meeting this morning to discuss an organization whose vision and actions are inspired by those principles. As a witness to two world wars in the space of a generation, Europe has put in place an instrument for regional cooperation in the fields of early warning, conflict prevention, crisis management and post-conflict rehabilitation. The ups and downs that have marked the existence of the OSCE since the signing of the Helsinki Final Act and the subsequent Conference for Security and Cooperation in Europe attest to the urgent nature of the OSCE's mission with regard to the scope of the challenges still to be met. That is why I would like to welcome the strategic option of structuring the OSCE's action around the political, military, economic and environmental dimensions, as well as the human and security dimensions.

The German chairmanship of the OSCE comes at a time when Europe is experiencing one of its most turbulent periods since the end of the Cold War. From Georgia to Nagorno Karabakh to Donetsk in Ukraine — in all of those regions the OSCE is facing daunting challenges, in addition to transnational threats such as terrorism, arms control challenges, crime, cybercrime, migration and trafficking in drugs, weapons and human beings. That is why I welcome

the approach that Mr. Steinmeier intends to use in his chairmanship — that of renewing dialogue, rebuilding trust and restoring security. For its part, Senegal, as a firm believer in the peaceful settlement of conflicts in Africa and the rest of the world, can only welcome the choice of Germany, which squares perfectly with the ideals of the United Nations.

In that regard, I would like to highlight and welcome the OSCE Permanent Council's decision to extend the mandate of the Special Monitoring Mission in Ukraine until 31 March 2017, and that of the Observer Mission deployed at the Gukovo and Donetsk checkpoints until 30 April of this year. We should remember that those two Missions, together with the OSCE Project Coordinator and the Trilateral Contact Group in Ukraine, make up the institutional mechanisms established to encourage a diplomatic solution to the Ukrainian crisis. In that regard, we should support the efforts that have already been launched to reduce tensions and promote peace, stability and security, as well as to facilitate among the authorities, civil society and ethnic and religious groups. Combined with strengthened technical and operational capabilities, the extension should help to stabilize the ceasefire, the arms withdrawal and the building of a national dialogue, in accordance with the Minsk agreements and with respect for the Normandy format.

The Nagorno Karabakh conflict should also remain at the centre of the efforts of the OSCE, which should continue to work to convene a conference capable of serving as the basis for a peaceful negotiated settlement of the crisis, in accordance with the relevant Security Council resolutions. If that is to be achieved, it is important to intensify efforts aimed at concluding an agreement on a cessation of hostilities and setting up a peace process under the auspices of the Minsk Group with respect for the States' territorial integrity and the sovereignty.

I would also like to highlight the importance of continuing the efforts to resolve the conflicts in Transnistria under the 5+2 negotiations format, and in Georgia through the international discussions in Geneva. While it is clear that those tasks remain complex and highly challenging, if they are to succeed the OSCE will have to work to strengthen confidence-building measures among the various parties. Hence the importance of a dynamic partnership with the United Nations, whose cooperation in that regard will continue to be valuable. Overall, however, we feel reassured by

the commitment of the Chairperson-in-Office to the Helsinki+40 Process, to the Review Conference on the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe scheduled for this autumn and to combating common threats such as terrorism.

I would like to conclude by reaffirming Senegal's full support for the ideal on which the Helsinki Final Act was founded, establishing on the basis of shared principles and objectives a Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian community from Vancouver to Vladivostok that is free, democratic, united and indivisible.

Mr. Yelchenko (Ukraine): We warmly welcome Mr. Steinmeier and would like to thank him for his tireless efforts on Ukraine, which have been demonstrated once again in his briefing to the Security Council today. I would like to express Ukraine's support for the priorities for 2016 of Germany's Chairperson-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). We particularly commend Germany's determination to focus its efforts on practical responses to the grave threats to security in the OSCE's area of operations. The Russian aggression against Ukraine in Crimea and the Donbas region remains at the top of that list. Due to necessity rather than any choice of ours, the issue of that aggression will continue to be at the centre of the OSCE's attention. Germany's participation in the Normandy format negotiations will be very helpful to the OSCE efforts in that regard.

Ukraine fully shares and supports the German chairmanship's motto — "Renewing dialogue, rebuilding trust, restoring security". It is a very accurate description of what is needed for the situation not just within the OSCE's purview but all over the world. Instead of dialogue, we frequently witness bitter exchanges of mutual accusations. These days, instead of a climate of trust, an overriding sense of mutual suspicion sets the tone in international politics. Instead of having a sense of security and confidence, States increasingly feel threatened in the current environment of systematic violations of international law, including the Charter of the United Nations, and of a lack of international instruments adequate to holding the perpetrators of such violations to account. Under the circumstances of these difficult times, Germany's commitment to leading the OSCE is highly commendable. The German chairmanship has set itself an ambitious and noble task. It is a high bar, and I would like to assure Mr. Steinmeier of our full support for his efforts.

The Security Council is vested with the primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and security. Still, one can hardly avoid noticing that the dominant trend is worsening. The growing potential for conflict across the globe is shaping our new security reality, and one permanent member of the Security Council has repeatedly resorted over the past decade to the most problematic area of that reality — armed aggression against neighbouring States in Europe that has resulted in occupation and, even more alarmingly, in the attempted annexation of part of the territory of another country, the first such attempt since the Second World War.

We have all been dealing with the Russian hybrid war against Ukraine, which is marked by the invention of artificial grounds for invasion, the deployment of regular troops without insignia and the use of pervasive, virulent propaganda. That has led to the illegal occupation of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol and the plunging of the Donbas region into a bloody conflict. Ukraine, like other European States, also has to counter regular attempts to destabilize its internal situation. The overall style of such subversive activities is recognizable through its use of similar tools such as marginal nationalist forces operating under pseudo-patriotic slogans, including, in the countries of the European Union, those voicing anti-immigrant sentiments.

I have to express our deep concern about the fact that the situation in Donbas remains fragile and prone to escalation, despite the significant efforts of Ukraine and the international community, including Mr. Steinmeier's personal contribution as a member of the Normandy ministerial framework. Ukraine's efforts to implement the Minsk agreements have not been reciprocated in Russia. Moscow still relies on the pseudo-republics it has manufactured as a tool that may be activated at any time the Kremlin considers expedient, including by triggering new phases of conflict.

For Ukraine, the Minsk agreements remain the agreed basis for a peaceful resolution to the situation in Donbas. Since the initial documents were signed, in September 2014, we have regularly initiated steps aimed at silencing the weapons there. It is profoundly regrettable that, a year after the Minsk package of measures was agreed on, its initial security provisions have yet to be implemented by Russia and its proxies. We are ready to fully implement the agreements and move forward with all aspects, including holding local

elections in various areas of Donbas, which must be conducted in accordance with Ukrainian legislation and OSCE standards in order to produce legitimate regional representatives. Our constitutional reform and decentralization will encompass the elected representatives and provide them with powers, responsibility and accountability. What we need in order to move forward is a solid security foundation, and in particular a comprehensive and sustainable ceasefire, the verified withdrawal of heavy weapons and unfettered monitoring by the OSCE throughout the conflict area, including at the border with Russia.

As progress on the security track is long overdue, we need to take decisive steps to establish the security conditions necessary for a peaceful settlement in Donbas. What is required is a genuine disengagement line rather than a contact line, with weapons effectively withdrawn, armed provocations by militants rendered impossible and an enhanced international presence capable of ensuring security on the ground, in addition to the monitoring and verification functions that the OSCE's Special Monitoring Mission currently performs. We welcome the recent extension of the mandate of the Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine upon Ukraine's request. While our invitation to deploy a United Nations international peacekeeping operation remains on the table, enhancing the OSCE capacities on the ground and reinforcing them with a special police mission under the auspices of the OSCE could become an effective tool in bringing peace to Donbas.

It is evident that the uncontrolled segment of the Ukrainian-Russian border makes the impact of all international efforts on de-escalation very limited, as replenishments to the illegal armed groups with weapons and manpower from Russia continue. As an agreed initial step until Ukrainian border guards resume control at the border, permanent monitoring and verification by the OSCE along all border sections of concern from both sides of the border should be ensured, as stipulated by the Minsk protocol of September 2014, also signed by Russia.

The release of all hostages and illegally detained persons, including Ukrainian political prisoners in Russia, will be a crucial benchmark for assessing Russia's readiness to embark on the de-escalation path. It is one of the few provisions of the Minsk agreement that contains a very specific timeframe, for apparent humanitarian reasons, that is, within five days of the withdrawal of heavy weapons from the contact line.

About two years ago Russia launched its aggression against Ukraine in Crimea, trampling fundamental international norms and principles, including those enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and the Helsinki Final Act. The united international response to Russia's illegal actions was delivered here in New York on 27 March 2014, when the General Assembly adopted its resolution 68/262, entitled "Territorial integrity of Ukraine".

Echoed by other organizations and States across the globe, the strong international condemnation proves that the issue of the illegally occupied peninsula is firmly on the agenda, whatever Russia claims. I am absolutely convinced that an international framework to address the Crimean case will be established sooner or later, as that is the only way to guarantee the full relevance of international law. Restoring respect for the fundamental norms and principles of our peaceful coexistence and cooperation and seeking their proper implementation are in the interests of both the United Nations and the OSCE.

Finally, allow me to express our deepest appreciation to all colleagues around the table who spoke strongly today in favour of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of my country. That is an extremely powerful message for those back home who stand fighting for it.

Mr. Gasso Matoses (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation expresses its appreciation for the presence of Minister Steinmeier in his capacity as Chairperson-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) to provide us with Germany's priorities during its chairmanship. We trust in the German leadership, given the country's political weight, its knowledge of the organization and its commitment to the search for solutions to conflicts. Spain extends its full cooperation and support to the German chairmanship.

Renewing dialogue, rebuilding trust and restoring security is not only a motto of the Germany chairmanship, it is also an objective that we share and support. We have analysed the chairmanship's priorities and we are satisfied to note that they correspond to a great extent with Spain's priorities within the organization.

The OSCE is the only regional organization that brings together 57 countries of the Euro-Atlantic, Euro-Asiatic and Euro-Mediterranean regions in a single forum and with the same principles and commitments, including respect for the territorial

integrity, sovereignty and independence of States, as has been reiterated here today. Its multidimensional security focus from the political, military, economic, environmental and humanitarian perspectives, as well as its concept of cooperative security, set forth in the December 2010 Astana Commemorative Declaration, among others, makes the OSCE an essential platform for strengthening the security of all of its member States and States of the region. None of the challenges that we face today, ranging from terrorism, the proliferation of weapons, cybercrime and climate change, can be addressed solely with exclusive tools or perspectives of a military or security nature.

Allow me to refer to one of the main challenges of the OSCE, which has been mentioned repeatedly in the Chamber today. I refer to the crisis in and around Ukraine.

Almost a year ago, in its resolution 2202 (2015), the Security Council adopted the package of measures for the implementation of the Minsk agreements. Unfortunately, one year later we continue to have to call for the implementation of those agreements. While we recognize the efforts made by the Government of Ukraine, we call on all the parties to the conflict and all those that have the capacity to assist to make firm progress in the implementation of the Minsk agreements. In particular, putting an end to the ceasefire violations is essential. The adoption of measures to mitigate the humanitarian impact of the conflict is also necessary. Spain recognizes and fully supports the role of the OSCE in the Trilateral Contact Group on Ukraine and through the Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine. We are aware of the limitations of the Mission and the challenges before it. Nonetheless, it is the best guarantee for an international presence in eastern Ukraine, and in that way to help put an end to the conflict. It is necessary that all the parties involved help the Mission in carrying out its mandate in all its areas of operation and that the Mission's full freedom of movement is guaranteed and respected. We also recognize the valuable work of the Normandy format and Germany in efforts to resolve this crisis. We trust that the next meeting of the format, scheduled for Thursday, 3 March, will make it possible to continue to make progress of the various elements of the Minsk agreements.

Allow me to move on to another region whose stability is closely linked to the future and the presence of the OSCE. I refer to the Mediterranean. Germany played a key role last year to promote cooperation in

the southern coastal area of Europe and to revitalize the Mediterranean Contact Group, which it chaired. We sincerely appreciate Minister Steinmeier's personal involvement in that work and his solid participation at the OSCE Mediterranean conference in Jordan in October 2015. Spain believes it is essential to invigorate and solidify cooperation with the Mediterranean cooperation partners, including Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Egypt, Jordan and Israel, and to strengthen the Group. In that regard, we continue to work with the current Austrian chairmanship of the Group, with which we are organizing an event in Madrid to be held in May.

Closely linked to this area, to which the Minister referred, the OSCE, in its comprehensive view of security, is a suitable framework to address the complicated phenomenon of the migration and refugee crisis, and it can provide important added value. We support the continued efforts begun last year in Belgrade in the lead-up to the next ministerial council to be held in Hamburg. We also hope that the next meeting on security, which will be held in Rome on 4 March, will also provide it with significant momentum. We place Spain's experience on comprehensive management of the migration phenomenon at the disposal of the chairmanship-in-office.

As Minister Steinmeier noted, the 2011 Vienna document on confidence-building and security measures will be reissued this year. It is undoubtedly an excellent opportunity to do that and align it on the basis of a constantly evolving security situation. We recognize the work that Germany is carrying out in that regard. This year the Council will also be undertaking the comprehensive review of resolution 1540 (2006), the Committee of which Spain is the Chair. The OSCE is probably the regional organization with the most experience in the implementation of the resolution. Therefore, we hope that we will be able to make a substantive contribution to the comprehensive review and, to that end, we make ourselves available to the chairmanship. The Chair of the Committee will visit the OSCE next April.

Finally, I wish to refer to one of the fundamental dimensions of the OSCE, its human dimension, as we are convinced that security is not possible if human rights and fundamental freedoms are not respected by law. We support the German chairmanship in its effort to continue strengthening this third dimension of the OSCE, and we agree on the central role of the

implementation of the obligations and commitments related to fundamental freedoms. In particular, we would like to acknowledge and welcome the references made by the Foreign Minister today on the issue of women and peace and security and the importance of the participation of women. Accordingly, we will continue to work in the framework of the OSCE to effectively satisfy the provisions of resolutions 1325 (2000) and 2242 (2015).

Today's meeting shows that the enhancement of cooperation between the OSCE and the United Nations is possible. Spain will contribute to that end through its membership in both entities. We do not consider it to be only a formal matter, but necessary in the effort to come up with synergies and work practices that create true added value.

Mr. Pressman (United States of America): I would like to begin by thanking by thanking the Chairperson-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), Foreign Minister Steinmeier, for his briefing and for being here with us today. We know that the partnership between the OSCE and the United Nations remains strong and we welcome the opportunity to hear about Germany's priorities in 2016 to advance the OSCE's efforts in support of peace and security.

At the Astana summit just over five years ago, all 57 OSCE members recommitted to the principles and values enshrined in the OSCE common documents, including that all OSCE norms, principles and commitments apply equally and without exception to each participating State and that we are accountable to our citizens and responsible to each other for their full implementation. Today, the principles and commitments embodied by the OSCE face some serious challenges, both from inside and outside the organization. From within, there is an uneven application of the Helsinki norms, principles and commitments, where some States are re-exerting a sphere of influence at the expense of other States, while, from without, regional crises and transnational threats are proliferating.

Efforts to resolve the conflict in Ukraine and the protracted conflicts in Moldova, Georgia and Nagorno Karabakh continue to face very frustrating obstacles. We commend the Chairperson-in-Office's efforts in support of resolving the crisis in Ukraine, including his leadership in obtaining an extension of the mandate of the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine

through 31 March 2017. The roles of both the OSCE Monitoring Mission and the Trilateral Contact Group are essential to restoring peace to Ukraine, and the full implementation of the Minsk agreements, including the ceasefire and weapons pullback, is critical. The Monitoring Mission also plays a critical role in assessing the humanitarian situation on the ground and facilitating the delivery of much-needed humanitarian aid.

The increase in violence along the line of contact in eastern Ukraine is of enormous concern — the worst since the ceasefire declaration of 1 September 2015. OSCE monitoring reports indicate that the number of ceasefire violations continues to rise — on just one day, 24 February, monitors registered nearly 850 explosions and firing of small and heavy weapons. The OSCE has also documented the movement of heavy weapons out of designated storage sites and placed in areas off-limits under the Minsk agreements.

When the Special Monitoring Mission was established, in March 2014, all 57 OSCE participating States agreed that “Mission members will have safe and secure access throughout Ukraine”. Yet, more than a year after the signing of the Minsk memorandum and protocol and the Minsk implementation package, Russian-backed separatists do not allow OSCE observers full access to all areas to monitor and verify the maintenance of the ceasefire, the withdrawal of heavy weapons and the presence of foreign fighters. Russian-backed separatist forces have repeatedly barred the Monitoring Mission from inspecting heavy weapons storage sites. Furthermore, the separatist routinely denied the Mission access to the Ukrainian-Russian border, while Russia unilaterally blocks the expansion of the OSCE border observation mission beyond the two current small checkpoints.

According to OSCE reports, movement restrictions on the Special Monitoring Mission often go hand-in-hand with weapons violations and have overwhelmingly occurred on the separatist side of the line of contact. In addition, the separatists continue to make direct threats against the Mission itself. On 15 February, near Kominternove, they once again threatened to shoot Mission members, which is the third such incident since January. The United States reiterates its call on Russia to direct the separatists it supports and supplies to immediately honour the ceasefire, withdraw heavy weapons visibly and verifiably, return those weapons to

their designated storage sites and end restrictions on the movements and activities of the Monitoring Mission.

The United States strongly supports the OSCE’s efforts to support a peaceful resolution of long-standing conflicts, such as its mission to broker a comprehensive settlement to the Transnistria conflict by facilitating direct dialogue between the sides and by supporting confidence-building measures. But in Transnistria, like in Donbas, local so-called authorities refuse to grant OSCE monitors unfettered access to do their important work. The United States calls for unrestricted access for the OSCE Mission to Moldova throughout the country, including the Transnistrian region, so that it can perform its activities and fulfil its mandate.

The OSCE continues its dedicated support of a negotiated settlement of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict. Regrettably, violence along the line of contact and the Armenia-Azerbaijan State border has escalated over the past several months. The United States condemns the use of mortars and other heavy weaponry, which have caused civilian casualties, and appeals to the sides to take immediate steps to reduce tensions and protect lives. The status quo is neither acceptable nor sustainable. We remind the sides that there can be no military solution to this conflict. As a Chair of the OSCE Minsk group, the United States will continue to work closely with the sides to achieve a lasting, negotiated settlement of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict based on the principles of international law, the Charter of the United Nations and the Helsinki Final Act.

The United States fully supports Georgia’s independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity. We urge the Russian Government to withdraw its troops to pre-war positions and allow humanitarian agencies and the European Union Monitoring Mission unfettered access in the occupied territories there. As a participant in the Geneva international discussions along with the OSCE and the United Nations, the United States remains committed to working with the parties and the other Chairs to improve the security and humanitarian situation for all residents of Georgia affected by the conflict.

There is an immediate need for coordinated response to the migration and refugee crisis in the OSCE region and beyond. Addressing the impact of the large numbers of migrants arriving in Europe requires rights-based responses to the challenges of migration, including by prioritizing respect for the human rights of migrants,

refugees and asylum seekers, and by developing the capacity of Governments to integrate new arrivals and counter anti-migrant sentiment, xenophobia and hate crimes. The OSCE continues to play a vital role in that regard, and the OSCE's role in support of the global effort to address weapons proliferation, including through implementation of resolution 1540 (2004), is critical. We strongly support the commitment of the OSCE to strengthen member States' commitments to implementing the provisions of resolution 1325 (2000) in order to increase the role of women in peacemaking and peacebuilding and to end violence against women in conflict.

The fundamental commitments of the OSCE have provided clarity, stability and continuity to participating States for more than 35 years in our common effort to promote comprehensive security throughout the Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian regions. We must all continue to implement our mutual commitments. We value the deepening cooperation and coordination between the United Nations and the OSCE to that end.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I shall now make a statement in my capacity as representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

The delegation of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela appreciates the briefing and the presence of the Chairperson-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), Mr. Frank-Walter Steinmeier, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Federal Republic of Germany. We also wish to extend our sincere congratulations to Germany on assuming the chairmanship of the organization.

Venezuela supports the work of regional organizations in promoting negotiated conflict resolution under Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations as an element of support for the principle of the peaceful settlement of disputes and where direct dialogue between the parties is a key element. In that context, our country supports the work being done by the OSCE in line with the Helsinki agreements, which provide it with important tools to respond to international challenges and to promote peace and stability in the region.

The OSCE has played an important role in strengthening relations among its member countries through dialogue, and, despite their differences, important consensus have been successfully achieved in different situations that required it. The role of the

chairmanship of the OSCE has become increasingly relevant to promoting dialogue and harmony among its members.

In the context of certain specific issues related to Ukraine, we wish to stress the need for the full implementation of resolution 2202 (2015), in support of the decision reached by the heads of State of Ukraine, Russia, France and Germany on 12 February 2015 in Minsk. We must continue efforts to find a political and diplomatic solution to the humanitarian crisis under which the parties are committed to working to achieve a firm and lasting peace. That is why a definitive cessation of hostilities must not be delayed, and we hope that this will come to pass.

As the chairmanship has already indicated, the complex situation in the Middle East has an impact on security and stability in the European region. Thus the destabilization of Libya, Syria and Iraq and the rapidly expanding terrorist phenomenon is an element that, along with other pending issues such as the settlement of the question of Palestine, makes it necessary to call on the European community to take action to prevent such conflicts and address the emergence of such phenomena. The destabilization of the Middle East and the Mediterranean has led to a difficult humanitarian situation and a desperate outflow of refugees towards the European region. In this respect, the OSCE can play a key role in supporting the countries most affected, based on a vision of identifying and addressing the root causes of the conflicts that lead to the displacement of peoples.

The promotion of security and stability and respect for human rights through the full implementation of international norms in this area are vital to fighting the discrimination, racism, intolerance and xenophobia that have been expressed in the form of attacks against the humanitarian assistance required for the wave of refugees, who come from both from the Middle East and North Africa.

We must continue to work towards the prevention of conflicts as a complement to the work of the OSCE, through a multidimensional approach aimed at addressing current challenges in this complex and multifaceted situation.

Finally, communication and coordination between the United Nations and the OSCE must be strengthened and intensified so as to promote international peace and security.

We wish the greatest success to Minister Steinmeier in his chairmanship of the OSCE so that he can carry out balanced and inclusive work, taking into account the views of all members of the OSCE, so as to achieve the objectives set within the framework of the priorities of this regional organization and thereby promote international peace and security.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

The representative of the Russian Federation has asked for the floor to make a further statement.

Mr. Churkin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): I should like to make a few brief comments.

First, I was surprised to note that, in the context of the principal issues, I agree with the statement made by the representative of the United States. First, he quite rightly noted that one of the most important principles of the OSCE is the equality of all members before international law. We fully agree with that and deem it unacceptable that there have been statements made on the right of certain States to determine the fate of the rest of the world.

Another issue that was rightly noted by the United States representative and with which we agree is the danger posed by a return to the principle of spheres of influence. We are critical of the expansion of NATO into the east and of how the European Union continues to formulate its policy of Eastern partnership. Eastern European States are given the choice to be either with the West or with the East.

As the Council will recall, the crisis in Ukraine broke out as a result of the fact that Brussels began to categorically demand that president Yanukovich immediately sign the agreement on association with the European Union. Therefore a return to the policy of the spheres of influence is extremely undermining in terms of consequences for European security.

Yet another element on which I fully agree with the representative of the United States is the continuing dangerous situation in terms of security between the Kyiv armed forces and rebel battalions that are continuing to operate in eastern Ukraine and Donetsk and Luhansk. What the representative of the United States did not say, however, and what needs to be said is that to a large extent this exacerbation is due to the fact that the Ukrainian armed forces took over a neutral space and began to defend a security zone there with

heavy weaponry. This runs totally counter to the logic and the letter of the Minsk agreements, which speak of the need for the withdrawal of forces. The Ukrainian forces are coming dangerously close to the armed groups, which has led to exchanges of fire and attacks.

In this regard, I cannot but express my disappointment at the statement made by my Ukrainian colleague, who repeated several propagandistic slogans with respect to Russia. I am wondering, when is Kyiv going to implement the clearly defined elements of the package? Why was a law not adopted last year on the special status of Donbas? When will it be adopted? When will the amnesty law be adopted? When will there finally be an agreement with the Kyiv authorities and the Luhansk and Donetsk leadership?

Upon the request of Kyiv and the leadership of Russia in the Normandy format, we convinced representatives of Donetsk and Luhansk to postpone the local elections that were supposed to take place at the end of last year, but prospects for agreement on how the elections will be held look rather dim. Indeed, there are difficulties in the context of the Contact Group, so it seems that Kyiv once again is really drawing out the process.

In this regard, I should like once again to reiterate the request that our colleagues in the Normandy format have heard. We need to be very demanding and act as a matter of principle. When agreements are reached at a high level, Kyiv must be required to implement them. I think that when that happens, other issues — which, as we heard, Mr. Steinmeier stressed during his recent meeting with Minister Klimkin— the fight against corruption and economic reforms will move forward, because in a conflict situation it is probably too optimistic to expect some sort of progress on such fronts.

So Kyiv first and foremost should want to see the implementation of the package of measures, just as Russia does. It is time to put an end to the crisis, which would not have begun in the first place had it not been for this undermining policy of spheres of influence, which the United States criticized today.

Finally, quite frankly I did not want to digress from the issue of Ukraine, but the representative of the United States spoke about Georgia and criticized Russia and what is required of us. I should like to recall that the irreversible political changes that took place in the Caucasus in 2008 happened as a result of the aggression that Georgian politicians carried out against

southern Ossetia. The United States supported them; at that time there were more than 100 United States military advisers in Georgia, so it would be naïve to think that they turned a blind eye to what was happening or missed it. So let us not engage in propaganda but concentrate on the ongoing work in the Caucasus and in Ukraine so as to normalize the situation after those crises, which were due to various factors, among which the United States played a rather significant role.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): The representative of the United States has asked for the floor to make a further statement.

Mr. Pressman (United States of America): I am pleased that the representative of the Russian Federation can agree with so much of what I had to say. It is too bad, however, that we cannot agree to some basic facts in this Chamber. The facts remain that Russia backed the separatists, Russia armed the separatists and Russia led a military campaign that led to the purported annexation of Crimea, in violation of the Charter of the United Nations. Those are the facts and, sadly for the people victimized by this crisis and these conflicts, these facts remain unchanged, regardless of whatever distractions are offered in the Chamber today.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): The representative of Ukraine has asked for the floor to make a further statement.

Mr. Yelchenko (Ukraine): I will not make a long statement again, because I said what I said.

It is probably very easy for my Russian colleague to pick a few parts of my statement and react to them. Consequently, my question is: Why does he not react to everything I said? Why does he not react to the figures, to my call for the release of the political prisoners who are being held in Russia? It is a fact, which has been proven by many, that Russia has fulfilled none of its obligations under the Minsk agreements. Let us talk about everything in the Minsk agreements, not only about the constitutional amendments and the elections. They are not the topic of this meeting, after all, so I will not go into detail.

Finally, during two years of aggression, a 40,000-strong army has been built up in the Donbas. That army is financed, equipped and maintained by Russia and commanded by Russian officers. It has been supplied with sophisticated modern Russian weaponry. I have a very long list of weapons that are not and

were never produced in Ukraine. Those weapons did not just fall from the sky. And the list goes on and on. Therefore, let us be more precise when we react to facts or allegations.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): The representative of the Russian Federation has asked for the floor to make a further statement.

Mr. Churkin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): I am very ready to go into detail. I do not think that we need to take Mr. Steinmeier's time, as he is already aware of this whole situation.

From the very beginning, we have said that the crisis in Ukraine had to be resolved politically. At the Geneva talks on 17 April 2014, which involved the participation of the Secretary of State of the United States, the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy of the European Union, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ukraine and the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Russia, we agreed on a declaration in which we stated that there was a need for inclusive political dialogue. Indeed, the Chairperson-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe also spoke about that in the road map. What was Ukraine's response? President Poroshenko put forth a peace initiative that provided a week for the capitulation of the citizens of Donbas. We immediately responded that there could be no military settlement; there must be a political one. The Ukrainians did not want a political settlement; they wanted a military one, so they get what they get.

Life is real and it is what is. My Ukrainian colleague understands that well. If he wants to go into the whole package of measures for the implementation of the Minsk agreements, we can do that, but we have already said these things many times and when everything that is supposed to happen has already been clearly established. Border control is supposed to happen last. It is all very clear in the package. A special status must be established and other things must be done, which Kyiv simply does not want to do.

Unfortunately, some States that have a strong influence on Kyiv — not in the Normandy format, but delegations around the table today — say “What do you want? Ukraine just cannot do it. We know it is written there, but Ukraine cannot do it.” So, the representative of Ukraine cannot raise that question. If he is really talking about a political settlement, there is a need to demand and ensure that Ukraine adopt the laws that

were supposed to be adopted under the package. Russia cannot do it for Ukraine.

Rhetorically, the representative of Ukraine can say whatever he wants, but unfortunately the situation in Ukraine will only deteriorate in that context and nobody will win.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to Mr. Steinmeier to respond to the comments made.

Mr. Steinmeier: I do not want to repeat myself and my statement from the beginning. I will avoid responding to representatives' comments. I only want to thank you, Mr. President, for your kind invitation and the members for all their comments. We are really grateful for members' support regarding our priorities

for the chairmanship of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) in 2016 and for their readiness for cooperation, which they have offered in this Chamber.

Members must ensure that we remain engaged in using the tools of the OSCE in order to improve the security situation on the European continent, especially as we progress on the way to the full implementation of the Minsk agreements. As our friend the Ambassador of France announced, we will be meeting in Paris on Thursday. I hope that we will achieve some progress, especially on the security situation and on our discussion on the election.

The meeting rose at 12.05 p.m.