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**STATEMENT BY
THE DELEGATION OF ITALY AT THE TWENTY-FIRST MEETING
OF THE OSCE MINISTERIAL COUNCIL**

Basel, 4 December 2014

Mr. Chairperson,

Given that Italy currently holds the Presidency of the Council of the European Union, I shall pass the floor, as is customary, to the European Union High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, whose position Italy fully supports.

First, however, I should like once again to congratulate the Swiss Chairmanship for the exemplary and extremely efficient manner in which it has led the OSCE in a particularly troubled period. I am certain that the Serbian Chairmanship, to which I extend my warmest wishes for success, will be able to take advantage of this positive experience to continue on the path we have embarked on.

I should also like to recall today's ceremony for the transfer to the Parties of responsibility for the implementation of Article IV of the 1995 Dayton Accords. We are happy that this task has been entrusted to an Italian official, Major General Michele Torres, to whom we offer our congratulations.

Mr. Chairperson,

We believe that in the crisis situation that we face today, we must search through the OSCE for ways of reducing tensions and re-establishing the conditions for co-operation, security and peace. I should like finally to stress the importance of the OSCE's Mediterranean dimension, which is of priority interest for Italy for the purpose of political dialogue and co-operation with the Mediterranean Partners.

Mr. Chairperson,

It is now my pleasure to give the floor to the High Representative Federica Mogherini.