

**17th Meeting of the OSCE Ministerial Council
Athens, 1-2 December 2009**

**Statement
by
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Mr. Chairman,
Distinguished Colleagues,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Allow me to address words of gratitude to Greece for the hospitality we enjoy in the cradle of democracy - the beautiful city of Athens. Last year the Finnish capital reminded us of the Helsinki Final Act with its Decalogue. This year Corfu gave birth to a Process which became the symbol of our nations' hopes for a more secure and stable Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian area.

2009 also marks a remarkable anniversary – 20 years from the fall of the Berlin wall and the launch of democratic change in Central and Eastern Europe. These history-making developments would have been impossible without the beginnings – the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe held almost 35 years ago which gave birth to the OSCE.

Our highest appreciation goes to the Chairman-in-Office, Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Greece, H.E. George Papandreou, and his team for their dedicated work in preparing and organizing this Ministerial meeting, as well as for the skillful management of the Corfu Process so far.

Bulgaria associates itself with the statement of Sweden on behalf of the European Union. In addition, let me focus on several points of particular importance to my country.

Under the Greek Chairmanship this year we have started an effort of long-term importance for the security in Europe. The **Corfu Process** has been launched to re-establish trust and confidence among the OSCE participating States and to restore the relevance of the OSCE on the European security landscape. We should maintain the momentum and aim at a comprehensive and balanced decision here in Athens that would provide strategic direction and a solid structure for continuation of the dialogue on the future of European security.

On the way ahead we should reconfirm our principles and commitments and the importance of their full and non-selective implementation.

Further on, we should build on the basis of the unquestionable OSCE *acquis*. Political will together with existing instruments, the latter being updated and upgraded when needed, is

necessary in order to adapt our Organization to the 21st century and would give it the tools to deal with existing and new challenges to security and stability.

Revitalizing the OSCE needs to be based on a serious analysis of the current situation and should produce concrete results. Our security environment continues to suffer gravely from the burden of the so-called **protracted conflicts**. In the course of our debate on European security we have recognized those conflicts as a major challenge and agreed upon the need to work in a cooperative manner using all existing mechanisms to achieve tangible progress in their solution. We should not underestimate the positive results we have seen this year. Still, the “variety” and persistence of unresolved conflicts runs contrary to our desire that the OSCE makes a difference.

Should we aim at restoring trust and confidence in the OSCE area, we have to address a number of important issues related to the **politico-military dimension and the CFE Treaty**.

Bulgaria considers the **CFE Treaty** as a corner stone of European and Euro-Atlantic security and stability. Therefore, we fully implement our obligations under the Treaty and its protocols, and we expect all other States Parties to act accordingly. Through dialogue, cooperation, compromise and on the basis of the proposals in the Parallel Action Package, it should be possible to overcome the existing difficulties.

Additionally, the fight against terrorism needs to remain high on the OSCE agenda. Bulgaria welcomes the decision in support and promotion of the international legal framework against terrorism. The same applies for the decisions on small arms and light weapons.

Mr. Chairman,

The OSCE needs a strong economic and environmental dimension in order to produce the adequate responses to the challenges of the globalized world.

In this light, Bulgaria firmly believes that **energy security** has rightly been elevated to the top of the global political agenda and we regard it as a priority for the OSCE.

Furthermore, particularly when referring to the upcoming Copenhagen Summit, allow me to remind us all that **environmental challenges do not recognize state borders. Climate change** is a threat multiplier, which already led to a deterioration of existing tensions. As a regional security arrangement under the United Nations Charter, the OSCE is bound to contribute to mitigating the security implications of this pressing problem.

Mr. Chairman,

In view of their cross-dimensional nature, it is obvious that good governance, transparency, rule of law, as well as, combating corruption, money laundering and financing terrorism, are closely linked to security, stability and democracy.

Human dimension issues have been present as an integral part in the discussion within the Corfu Process. We commend that, despite the variety of opinions, an agreement has emerged on certain basic parameters:

Firstly, the link between the human dimension and maintaining the peace, stability and prosperity;

and,

Secondly, the key importance of our common commitments in the human dimension of the OSCE.

Throughout the year the Greek Chairmanship and the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights have laid particular emphasis on tolerance and non-discrimination. Despite these efforts Bulgaria notes that non-tolerance and hate speech have not been overcome in some parts of the OSCE area, notably in the Western Balkans. We believe that the Organisation should increase its engagement in addressing them.

Mr. Chairman,

In conclusion, allow me to welcome and wish success to Kazakhstan as the next Chair of our Organization.

Thank you for your kind attention.