

**16th Meeting of the OSCE Ministerial Council
Helsinki, 4-5 December 2008
Statement by H.E. Mr. Ivailo Kalfin,
Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs
of the Republic of Bulgaria**

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

May I, at the outset, express my gratitude to Finland for hosting our meeting in a symbolic place for the OSCE – the beautiful city of Helsinki. The name of Helsinki goes hand in hand with the notion of success and reminds us of the Helsinki Final Act with its Decalogue. My appreciation goes further to the Chairman-in Office, H.E. Minister Alexander Stubb, and his team for their dedicated work in preparing and organizing our Ministerial.

Bulgaria has associated itself with the statement of France on behalf of the European Union. Now let me expand on some points in my national capacity.

For several decades now the OSCE has successfully implemented and developed its comprehensive approach to security in its three dimensions. The famous OSCE tool-kit - preventive diplomacy, network of field presences, early warning, conflict prevention, crisis management and post-conflict rehabilitation, never ceased to be instrumental in meeting threats and challenges to security and in building mutual confidence.

Nevertheless, new threats and challenges continue to come to the fore and affect our world, sometimes in an adverse way. It is a matter of political responsibility and wisdom to recognize these facts and through constructive dialogue find solutions to problems and tensions, thus enhancing mutual understanding and confidence, cooperation and stability.

Our security environment continues to suffer gravely from the burden of the so called **“frozen” or “protracted” conflicts**. At our last meeting in Madrid I brought the attention of my colleagues to the truism that if things do not improve they are bound to deteriorate. Sadly enough, this has been proved by the conflict in **Georgia** in August 2008. For the first time in this century we witnessed an armed conflict in Europe resulting in an infringement on the territorial integrity of an OSCE participating State. Reaffirming the support for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Georgia within its internationally recognized borders, Bulgaria calls on the parties involved to adhere to the letter

and spirit of the ceasefire agreement, to continue participation in the Geneva talks in an earnest and down-to-matter way in pursuit of a lasting solution of the conflict. Building on the efficient and future oriented reaction of the French Presidency of the European Union, the OSCE has an important role to play in the conflict resolution and a following post-conflict rehabilitation of this hearth of tension.

It is important that the Ministerial Council further identifies ways of advancing towards solutions to the “frozen conflicts”. Bulgaria favours strong regional statements on **Nagorno-Karabakh** and the **Republic of Moldova**, as more proactive approach to the conflict settlement process there is needed, while using all available instruments for reaching a peaceful resolution.

Certainly, the **politico-military dimension** of security continues to be at the focus of the OSCE activities. However, the work in this dimension is seriously undermined by the current status of the **CFE Treaty**. It is one of the most valuable elements of the Euro-Atlantic security system and we believe that through dialogue, co-operation and compromise a progress could be achieved next year. Bulgaria will continue to fully implement its obligations under the CFE Treaty and expect all other States Parties to act in the same spirit.

While acknowledging the leading role of the United Nations, we strongly support our Organization’s continued involvement in the fight against terrorism through implementation of the relevant OSCE documents and decisions. We see great merit in the adoption of the decisions on combating terrorism and on border security and management. Same goes for the draft decisions on small arms and light weapons and on stockpiles of conventional ammunitions.

Mr. Chairman,

Launching a strategic debate on **the economic and environmental dimension** of security in 2009 will be a proper answer of our Organization to the global economic challenges that the participating States are confronted with. In this regard we note that an increasing number of our partners in the OSCE are acknowledging the notion of climate change implications on security. The progress achieved by the OSCE on maritime and inland waterways cooperation is also commendable and will further its positive effect in the OSCE space and especially in the Black Sea region.

We welcome the dynamics in **the human dimension** of security. In this context, we support as timely and highly relevant the initiative of the Finnish Chairmanship for decisions on enhancing OSCE efforts to improve the situation of Roma within the OSCE area and to step up our responses to trafficking in

human beings. This year we also mark a historical moment in the field of human rights – the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. We look forward to capitalizing on this moment by highlighting the added value of the OSCE in promoting human rights and fundamental freedoms in Europe as indispensable part of our comprehensive approach to security. In this regard, the OSCE has good practices to share with other international organizations and initiatives, including the Alliance of Civilizations, a project my country strongly supports.

Mr. Chairman,

In concluding, I would like to witness once more high appreciation for the efforts of the Finnish Chairmanship-in-Office and to welcome my friend, Minister Dora Bakoyannis of Greece as the incoming Chairperson-in-Office of the OSCE with the best wishes for success.