

MC.DEL/16/06
4 December 2006

ENGLISH
Original: SPANISH

STATEMENT
BY THE MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF SPAIN,
MR. MIGUEL ANGEL MORATINOS CUYABÉ, AT THE
FOURTEENTH MEETING OF THE OSCE MINISTERIAL COUNCIL

Brussels, 4 and 5 December 2006

Mr. Chairman,
Ministers,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I should like first of all to state that Spain fully endorses the words of the Finnish European Union Presidency, including its congratulations and expression of gratitude to the Belgian Chairmanship, particularly Minister Karel De Gucht and his delegation in Vienna, for their excellent work throughout the course of the year.

As we prepare to take over the mantle in a few weeks' time, I should like to make a few comments on behalf of my country.

This Ministerial Council comes at the end of a year of difficult negotiations. Belgium assumed the Chairmanship at a complicated time and has managed very well. During the year that is drawing to a close, the participating States have relied on the main strength of the OSCE, namely its role as a forum for security dialogue and discussion. This approach needs to be consolidated and intensified.

We can look forward today and tomorrow to some intense hours of discussion aimed at putting into practice the profound and continuing commitment of our Governments to the aims of security and co-operation. We have an inexorable commitment to ensure that security wins out against threats and that co-operation prevails over confrontation in the OSCE area.

Our Organization is not an end in itself but an instrument of peace, dialogue and the consolidation of a number of shared and freely accepted values. Only through determined action will we be able to overcome ancient quarrels and outstanding problems.

An organization like the OSCE, which is based on the principle of consensus, should be a meeting place for countries that although very different have the same objective, namely to overcome differences. We shall not solve our problems by confrontation, isolation or imposing solutions. Accepting the indisputable reality that we all share common values and principles, we must help each other on the basis of constructive dialogue and respect for individual differences. We must endeavour to create a family atmosphere within the OSCE.

I firmly believe in the values that the OSCE represents and in the need to strengthen them. I realize that we still have a number of outstanding tasks in the field of crisis management and confidence-building. I respect the enormous efforts that have been made but I believe that we can do much more to build bridges across the new dividing lines that have arisen since the ideological divisions were overcome. We can push harder to break down the walls that have been erected in the prolonged years of conflict in some areas.

I cannot reconcile myself to the idea that in a few years' time we shall be able to congratulate ourselves only on having managed the crises but not of having solved the underlying problems. Can we be content and accept as normal the fact that for the last seven years we have not been able to establish the necessary conditions for holding a new OSCE summit?

Mr. Chairman,

I hope that we will be in a position to adopt a series of decisions and declarations. We are supporting projects covering areas ranging from the prosecution of Internet crime, terrorism and sexual exploitation to measures to modernize the Organization. In doing so, we have initiated a process of economic and environmental co-operation, and at the same time the Organization has become more effective at combating organized crime, intolerance and discrimination.

The Spanish Government has played an active role in fighting terrorism. Spain is a country that has endured its barbarity, which it takes steps to counter with great political determination while at the same time calling within the Organization for recognition and protection of victims. In the politico-military dimension, Spain has contributed to the donor conference on South Ossetia and supported projects in Belarus, the Caucasus and Central Asia.

In the economic and environmental dimension, Spain has supported projects in the Balkans, the Caucasus and Central Asia on the promotion of environmental education and sustainable development, border control, the fight against corruption and business initiatives by women.

In the human dimension Spain has contributed to ensuring that the OSCE fosters respect, dialogue and effective co-operation by promoting activities to encourage tolerance and combat discrimination.

This co-operation has extended to education, the promotion of human rights and the involvement of women in security and in democratic and institutional processes.

On the basis of dialogue, multilateral co-operation and effective policies, we should be able to agree on and apply measures for security, the management of migration, economic growth and energy. It is of vital importance to involve the most dynamic sectors in our societies, especially women, young people and the elderly who are the beneficiaries of and stakeholders in this dynamism.

Spain, which together with Turkey launched the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations initiative, is grateful for the assistance and active support of the OSCE, which could play a major role in the application and development of the recommendations that the

United Nations Secretary-General will present on 18 December. During our Chairmanship we shall support conferences on these matters in Bucharest and Córdoba.

This year Spain chaired the Contact Group with the Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation, a role that it welcomed as a means of strengthening European and Spanish links with the region, in which we actively co-operate.

The Government of Spain believes that dialogue with these OSCE Partners is of strategic importance and is in favour of updating the co-operation models. I am in no doubt that the South is just as important for security and co-operation as the East. For this reason, in view of the growing interaction with this Mediterranean world, which is often in a state of disruption and upheaval, our societies must deal with a large cultural and religious diversity, which can serve as an excuse for intolerance, discrimination or contempt — something that we must resolutely combat. To do this a much closer association with the Mediterranean Partners is necessary and highly advisable.

Spain has stepped up its commitment to the OSCE and has made intensive preparations for the Chairmanship. I am aware of the responsibility and the challenge of heading an Organization as complex and flexible as this one. Its multi-dimensional security focus, the adoption of decisions by consensus and its decentralized structure form a basic pillar of the international architecture. It is therefore important to intensify collaboration between the Secretary General, the institutions, the missions and the Parliamentary Assembly.

I should like to conclude with a quote from the recent Cervantes Prize winner, the poet Antonio Gamoneda, who said: “The ability to reason that we have in us will prevail even when the sky is swept away by the wind.”

Thank you.