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**STATEMENT BY MR. HANS WINKLER, STATE SECRETARY FOR  
FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE REPUBLIC OF AUSTRIA, AT THE  
FOURTEENTH MEETING OF THE OSCE MINISTERIAL COUNCIL**

Brussels, 4 and 5 December 2006

Mr. Chairman,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

First of all, I should like to thank the OSCE Chairman-in-Office, Foreign Minister De Gucht, and his colleagues in Vienna and Brussels for their commitment and the successful work they have done for our Organization. I should also like to express my gratitude for the hospitality that we have been shown here in Brussels. I wish the future Spanish Chairmanship every success.

Energy security, tolerance, dialogue among religions and peace efforts in the Balkans were the issues facing us at the start of the year when we assumed the Presidency of the Council of the European Union (EU). The OSCE was also confronted with these issues and it was clear that we had to co-operate closely if we were to solve the questions facing Europe. I am pleased that our initiative for a joint statement on greater co-operation between the OSCE and the EU was successful — we now have a text that has been agreed upon to a large extent. It was important in this connection that both parties — the OSCE and the EU — came to realize that the co-ordination of their respective activities was to the advantage of both parties.

The EU will, together with the OSCE, assume important responsibilities in Kosovo. I therefore support the efforts to define the role of the OSCE in Kosovo. Following the addition of Montenegro as an OSCE participating State, regional co-operation in the Balkans is of particular importance.

A good proportion of the proposals made in Ljubljana to strengthen the OSCE have been translated into decisions on organizational measures. I attach particular importance to these structural improvements because only in this way can the OSCE maintain its flexible way of working, which gives it added value over comparable organizations.

I should like to thank the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, its Director and his team for the excellent work they have done in producing the report on common responsibilities in the human dimension. Whether it is a matter of democratic elections, freedom of opinion and assembly, the observance of human rights in the fight against terrorism, various forms of intolerance or the fate of migrants and refugees, or whether it concerns the ability of human rights advocates, non-governmental organizations or civil society in general to operate freely, the report provides a general analysis and indicates where we must seek solutions in order to guarantee human security, that is security for all citizens, and should serve as a basis for our work together.

Through the Islam conference held a year ago in Vienna and numerous other inter-religious and inter-cultural events, Austria demonstrated the great importance it attaches to tolerance. Within the OSCE, we have contributed to the report to the Secretary-General of the United Nations by the Alliance of Civilizations. The three OSCE special representatives for tolerance have done a good job and their task now is to show the OSCE the way in this sensitive area.

Austria attaches particular priority to non-proliferation and welcomes the decision to support national implementation of United Nations Security Council resolution 1540. The disposal of small arms and light weapons, surplus conventional ammunition and missile fuel is an important task in the interests of human and environmental security.

The OSCE has developed an impressive profile in the fight against terrorism, organized crime and trafficking in drugs and human beings, and with regard to the question of border security. It should continue to strengthen its work in the area of non-military security.

If the work of the three dimensions is to be organized in three committees in the future, the cross-dimensional approach should not be neglected. Demining and non-military security have just as much to do with human security as transport, communications and the theme of the economic and environmental dimension for 2007 — land degradation, soil contamination and water management.

I also believe that geographical balance in the distribution of tasks within the Organization is essential if we are to achieve our common goals. Every participating State that has subscribed to the principles and commitments of this Organization ought to be able to assume the Chairmanship of the OSCE. On that basis, Kazakhstan could play a constructive leading role not only for the Central Asian region but also for the Organization as a whole.

Central Asia concerns all of Europe. As an organization based on partnership, the OSCE represents the ideal forum for mutually profitable co-operation.

We have watched the exacerbation of the conflict situations in Moldova/Transdniestria and Georgia/South Ossetia with great concern. We must step up the efforts towards conflict resolution and a normalization of the living conditions in these regions.

Austria is convinced that the OSCE, with its many years of experience in conflict management and, above all, in conflict prevention, has achieved a great deal and can make a considerable contribution in the future. Not only material resources and personnel but also patience and perseverance are necessary in this respect.

By way of conclusion, I am delighted to inform you that the new OSCE headquarters in Vienna will be finished on time. In this regard as well, these new headquarters in one of the most attractive palaces in central Vienna will give a new aspect to the revitalized OSCE. We will mark the handover in autumn 2007 in true OSCE fashion.

Thank you for your attention.