



MINISTÉRIO DOS NEGÓCIOS ESTRANGEIROS

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Statement by  
Secretary of State for European Affairs of Portugal,  
Mr. Manuel Lobo Antunes

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Allow me to start by commending Belgium and Minister de Gucht in particular, for an excellent chairmanship in what has been a most busy and challenging year for the OSCE.

I would also like to take this opportunity to extend my congratulations to Foreign Minister Milan Rócen and, on behalf of the Portuguese Government, warmly welcome Montenegro as the 56<sup>th</sup> participating State of the OSCE.

Mr. Chairman,

Portugal attaches particular value to the cooperative stance, based on mutual confidence and respect, which has encouraged participating States to seek common approaches to complex issues and conflicting interests, thereby underlining the significance of the OSCE's fundamental elements – the comprehensiveness and indivisibility of security and the allegiance to shared principles and commitments. Liberty, democracy, and the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms form the core of our community of values.

We firmly believe that the OSCE's overall achievements and political commitments in the **human dimension** of security remain the



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cornerstones of a whole, free and united Europe based on the fundamental principles of democracy. In this respect, we are pleased to look back at 2006 as a rich and successful year in the area of human dimension events.

Strengthening the OSCE's **Economic and Environmental Dimension** is also an important aspect of security and stability in the OSCE region. We welcome the recent work of the Economic and Environmental Forum regarding migration and transportation and support the topic foreseen for next year's 15<sup>th</sup> Economic and Environmental Forum on land degradation, soil contamination and water management.

The threats and challenges that **terrorism** continues to pose are a reminder that much has yet to be done in the area of counter-terrorism. Through its comprehensive and cross-cutting approach, the OSCE can assist participating States and Co-operation Partners in strengthening the capacity to deal with this ordeal, while simultaneously promoting full respect for human rights.

The re-emergence of intolerance, mistrust and xenophobia is, in my country's view, one of today's main threats to world-wide security. In the OSCE much has already been achieved but we, the participating States, must not shy away from taking decisive steps to **combat intolerance and discrimination** in all its forms and manifestations.

Portugal is deeply convinced that this can only be achieved through a collective approach, including through active partnerships with our **Partners for Co-operation** and with other international organizations. In this respect, we particularly welcome the OSCE's



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contribution to the **Alliance of Civilizations Initiative** and, looking ahead to 2007, fully support the incoming Spanish Chairmanship's intention to devote further attention to the theme of "Diversity and Participation in Pluralistic Societies".

Chairman,

It is of major importance to preserve all assets and instruments that have allowed the Organization successfully to fulfil its role. In this context, we welcome measures aimed at enhancing the OSCE's overall effectiveness in a changing environment. Change and continuity are not necessarily antagonistic; on the contrary, they can be mutually reinforcing.

The taskings which we entrusted to the Permanent Council last year were meant to achieve that goal. The Chairmanship's Report has, in our view, correctly identified the issues that are both the most conducive to improving the Organization's functioning and the most likely to reach consensus.

We would therefore support granting international legal status to the OSCE, and hope that a Convention to this end can be adopted.

In Ljubljana, we also tasked the **Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights** to provide us with a report on a number of issues that we consider of the utmost importance. Let me express my country's appreciation for the ODIHR's report and the recommendations therein.



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We welcome the Office's recommendations on ways to enhance the implementation of existing commitments, both by participating States and by the OSCE structures and Institutions. My country is willing to consider the adoption of supplementary commitments on elections, democracy and the rule of law, countering terrorism, prevention of torture and tolerance and non-discrimination.

We also welcome the Office's intentions to increase the overall transparency of the recruitment processes, to promote the geographical diversification of election observers and to enhance its cooperation with the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly on the basis of the 1997 Co-operation Agreement.

I would like to conclude by expressing my best wishes to Spain, the incoming Chairmanship in Office of the OSCE. The Portuguese Government wishes Minister Moratinos all the best in his endeavours. We can assure him that we are ready to give our full cooperation and support, both as an OSCE participating State and in our future capacity as EU Presidency, during the second half of 2007.