

17th OSCE Ministerial Council
Athens, 1-2 December 2009

Statement by H.E. Mr. Joao CRAVINHO, Secretary of State for
Foreign Affairs and Co-Operation, Portugal

Mr. Chairman,

Throughout 2009, a year of great promise but also of significant challenges, we have been indeed fortunate to be able to rely upon the enlightened leadership of the Greek Chairmanship. I would like to start by expressing Portugal's deep appreciation for the work developed by Greece in steering the OSCE. I would also like to fully endorse the speech of Minister Biltd in his capacity as Presidency of the EU.

In the twelve months since Helsinki, the establishment of the informal Corfu Process has impacted positively on the OSCE area, not least because it has allowed for a clearer picture of our common security. Differences of perception are hopefully being better understood, and we believe this to be fundamental in order to start restoring confidence and trust.

The notion of security in the OSCE area as cooperative, indivisible and comprehensive is being reinforced as a result of our dialogue. Corfu is also showing how much the OSCE – with its *acquis* and inclusive membership – is well suited to play a key role in facing the threats of the 21st Century.

We must envisage the post-Athens phase of the process with openness, resolve, and willingness to engage in dialogue across all dimensions.

As we said in Corfu, creative engagement by all will be required, bearing in mind that we are living through a new era, an era which is different in many fundamental manners from the Cold War or the immediate Post Soviet period. Ours is an era characterized by asymmetric and trans-national threats that pose a decisive challenge to our common security.

Portugal sees the present situation as challenging but equally as representing a unique opportunity to advance the cause of effective multilateralism. For this, we must all generate the

conditions that will allow us to feel more secure in our common space. In this regard, progress in the conflicts that still affect our area would contribute significantly to increased security and trust, allowing for further development of the OSCE framework.

We took note of the proposal of the draft treaty on European security just presented by the Russian Federation and we are certainly open to start discussing it within the Corfu process.

We see Corfu as an evolutionary and open-ended process, combining the need to take careful and firm steps with a healthy level of ambition, necessary to carry the dialogue forward as an increasingly convergent exercise.

It is in this framework that the European security Dialogue must be anchored. To succeed, such a process will have to be nurtured and pushed forward at the right moments. In this regard, there is the need for political impetus, coming from the highest level. We therefore support holding an informal Summit next year during the Kazak Chairmanship.

Mr. Chairman,

We fully support the Chair's efforts to adopt a Ministerial Declaration, sending out a clear signal of our determination to re-engage with each other on the basis of our common principles and values.

We hope that the Decisions we will be adopting tomorrow will contribute to increase the OSCE's ability to promote cooperation in responding to new and old security challenges.

Existing instruments in the political and military dimension have served us well, but need to be adapted to the changing security environment. We view favourably the possibility of undertaking a targeted review of the Vienna Document.

Portugal continues to support all efforts aiming at the preservation of the arms control regime in Europe, especially those trying to overcome the current stalemate in the CFE Treaty. Progress in this regard can have a substantial positive impact in all other areas of our common security.

We are committed to the adoption of a meaningful set of Decisions in the fields of police activities, anti-terrorism and the fight against narcotics, all of which are areas where the

OSCE has been adding value to international cooperative efforts.

Athens represents also an important step in revitalizing and refocusing the OSCE's second dimension. The Corfu Process has highlighted the importance of economic and environmental issues to the common security of the OSCE area. In this regard, we should focus on domains where we can bring added value: migrations, transport, good governance, environment and security; and energy security.

We strongly believe that the respect for the dignity and worth of every human being is at the very foundation of freedom, justice and peace. The respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms; democracy and the rule of law; tolerance and non-discrimination are indispensable to achieve sustainable security amongst, as well as within, the participating States. This comprehensive, holistic approach to security is a fundamental asset of the OSCE.

The responsibility to implement our common commitments in the Human Dimension represents one of the central tasks of our organisation and is a matter of direct and legitimate concern to all participating States.

New threats to security have an intrinsically cross-dimensional nature. We support efforts aiming at increasing the coordination between the OSCE's executive structures and also in what regards cooperation with other international organizations, namely on the basis of the Platform for Cooperative Security.

Mr. Chairman,

I'd like to convey to the future Kazak Chairmanship our best wishes for their work in 2010 and assure them of our support.

From our point of view, the Kazak Chairmanship represents the turning of a new page in the development of our organization, illustrating the OSCE's commitment to the principles of indivisible and equal security for all participating States.

We are confident that the Kazak Chairmanship will bring new perspectives and added value to the OSCE and will contribute to increase mutual understanding and to further translate our concept of cooperative and comprehensive security into practice.

We welcome the perspective of Ireland assuming the Chairmanship of the OSCE in 2012.

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