

S T A T E M E N T
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ENGLISH only

Distinguished Mr. Chairman,
Dear colleagues,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me first join others thanking the Slovenian Chairmanship for the generous hospitality and excellent preparation of this Ministerial in all aspects. I also wish to express our words of appreciation to Slovenia, namely minister Rupel, for the work done during the demanding year while fulfilling so effectively the role of the OSCE Chairman in Office.

Mr. Chairman,

May I begin by congratulating the Slovenian Chairmanship for the successful completion of negotiations on the scales of contribution for 2005-2007. We welcome the decision taken on 25 November of this year in this regard as a key element necessary for the future smooth functioning of the Organization.

The OSCE has passed an uneasy but a productive year - the year full of important anniversaries. A need for internal reform stemming from the change of global security environment has found its reflection in a balanced report of the Panel of Eminent Persons. The High Level Consultations on reform held this September in Vienna, in our view, have also proved to be highly instrumental for reviewing the OSCE activities, lessons learned as well as defining priorities for the years to come. We are confident that the decisions on strengthening the effectiveness of the OSCE, to be adopted at this Ministerial, will move the reform process forward.

The role of the OSCE with its comprehensive approach to security and cooperation is irreplaceable. Internal reforms should not take our attention away from the core work and should bring no change to our common goals and commitments we share and highly value.

Slovakia is ready to support further steps towards rebalancing the activities in all three dimensions. We support strengthening of the activities both in political-military as well as economic-environmental dimensions that is being reflected in decisions taken in this context. The increased role of these two dimensions, nevertheless, should not happen at the expense of the human dimension. The comprehensive acquis established and developed in this dimension remains crucial. Speaking about human rights, we are concerned about the latest developments in Belarus and Uzbekistan.

Mr. Chairman,

The OSCE participating States have adopted a significant number of commitments in different areas over the past Ministerial Council meetings. This year was marked by efforts to

implement them. We are pleased by the progress achieved so far, particularly in the field of fight against intolerance and terrorism. We welcome and support further decisions on fight against terrorism to be taken at this Ministerial Council.

On the other hand, we have to admit that only a limited progress has been achieved in some areas. Regretfully, this assessment relates to the settlement of unresolved "frozen" conflicts in the OSCE area, as well as to the implementation of the Istanbul commitments. We welcome the progress towards fulfilment of the Istanbul commitments in Georgia. At the same time we would expect their full implementation by concerned parties in Moldova as well, that would enable us to move forward with the ratification of the Adapted CFE Treaty.

Slovakia pays a primary attention to the developments in the Balkan region. I am glad that we can register an overall positive development, although we are still far away from a really stable and irreversible process. This relates first of all to Kosovo. Regardless of relatively stable situation this year, all parties concerned confirm that a long-term international presence in Kosovo is needed. With continuous transformation of UNMIK, the OSCE is expected to play even more responsible role.

On the other hand, we should be ready to close down OSCE field missions in countries, where substantial progress has been achieved. I am talking about Croatia. This country has significantly advanced on its way towards stability and democracy, which was also reflected this October in the EU decision to start the accession talks with it.

We also welcome intensified efforts in settlement of the Transnistrian conflict. Through seconding the specialists, Slovakia actively supported creation of the EU monitoring mission on the Transnistrian border that has already begun its work. In our opinion, broader international presence in conflict zone will bring independent and objective views necessary in seeking the possible solution.

Let me conclude with optimistic expectations for the future. I am sure that the OSCE will continue to face a lot of challenges and tasks and we all have to co-operate closely in order to deal with them successfully. As the Secretary General of NATO recently said in the OSCE premises, there is - unfortunately - enough space for all of us in trying to make our world more secure and more stable.

My country uses every opportunity within its capabilities to contribute to this process. In the upcoming capacity of a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council, Slovakia will do its best in efforts to find the solution of the existing international issues.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, let me wish the upcoming Belgian Chairmanship every success in its role in 2006.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.