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**STATEMENT BY H.E. MS. KINGA GÖNCZ
MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS
OF THE REPUBLIC OF HUNGARY**

OSCE MINISTERIAL COUNCIL MEETING

(Helsinki, 4 December 2008)

Mr. Chairman,

Let me first of all express our appreciation to the Government of Finland for its warm hospitality and for its tireless efforts and excellent work during the whole year.

Hungary fully subscribes to the statement delivered by the distinguished Foreign Minister of France on behalf of the European Union. At the same time, let me add, in my national capacity, some thoughts on a few issues we attach particular importance to.

It has indeed been a challenging year for our Organization, primarily because of the conflict in Georgia where, in spite of the efforts of the international community the situation remains tense. Therefore it is particularly important to maintain a strong international presence throughout Georgia, including South Ossetia and Abkhazia. The prompt decision to dispatch an additional 20 military monitors in August once again proved the important role the OSCE and its missions can play in crisis management. We regret however, that consensus could not be reached on the modalities for the deployment of another 80 observers as originally planned. We highly value the work of the military monitors (among them two Hungarians) and we have made a financial contribution to support their activities. Consequently, Hungary strongly supports the efforts of the chairmanship to renew the current mandate of the OSCE Mission to Georgia providing for access to South-Ossetia.

The OSCE along with the EU and the UN co-chairs the Geneva process launched to bring stability to Georgia. This is a clear recognition of the important contribution our organization has made towards the solution of this protracted conflict. We have no doubt that the OSCE has a role to play in the efforts of the international community aiming at a peaceful and lasting solution of the conflict based on full respect for the principles of independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Georgia within its internationally recognized borders.

Mr. Chairman,

OSCE field missions are one of the most efficient tools at our disposal. They continue to make a significant contribution to stability and security throughout the OSCE area. However, field missions should be continuously adapted to the constantly changing security environment and their work should always reflect our priorities. We are of the view that the security and stability of the southern part of Central Asia is a vital interest of ours. Therefore the decision we took a year ago in Madrid to enhance OSCE's engagement in fields of border security and management with Afghanistan should be implemented swiftly. Hungary hopes that a consensus will also be reached soon on projects to be initiated within the territory of Afghanistan as requested by our partner for co-operation.

Though the situation in the Balkans remains complex and requires our further attention, there have also been positive developments in this part of Europe. The OSCE Mission in Kosovo provides impartial information on the situation on the ground and valuable support to the efforts of the international community. Therefore we are pleased to note that an agreement has been reached on the extension of OMIK's mandate enabling the mission to continue its work. At the same time, in the light of the considerable progress Croatia has made in all relevant areas, we are confident that the present extension of the mandate of the OSCE office in Zagreb is the last and,

by the end of next year, all requirements will have been met for putting an end to our presence in Croatia.

Mr. Chairman,

Hungary believes that the foundations of our security are solid and, with the necessary political will, they can effectively contribute to countering our common challenges. At the same time, we are prepared to listen to new ideas to strengthen our common security. We certainly agree that the OSCE, covering the area stretching from Vancouver to Vladivostok, could serve as an appropriate forum for such a discussion. In principle, we are also open to the idea of holding an OSCE summit if and when we have made enough progress to substantiate one.

In our view however, a dialogue on security should be based on the already existing structures and mechanisms, should recognize the fundamental right of states to determine their security arrangements, and should not try to undermine already existing commitments. Since our security is indivisible our North-American partners should also be involved in such a dialogue. Genuine democracy, the promotion and protection of human rights including the rights of national minorities and the peaceful settlement of the so called protracted conflicts are also part and parcel of our broad concept of security.

The long-term viability of the conventional arms control regime in Europe and of the CFE Treaty a cornerstone of Euro-Atlantic security is another essential element of our security architecture. Together with our NATO Allies we have made a constructive proposal, the so-called “parallel actions package” to address the concerns of the Russian Federation and to achieve the earliest possible entry into force of the Adapted Treaty. Though no substantial progress has been made so far we still hope that Russia will respond positively and resume the implementation of its commitments under the Treaty. Regrettably the consequences of the conflict in Georgia and the unilateral recognition of South-Ossetia and Abkhazia have made finding a solution even more complicated.

Finally, let me return to the issue of the implementation of commitments in particular in the field of human rights. Since we still stand for the common values that have united us since 1990 we cannot go along with an approach that would leave aside commitments in the third dimension and cannot accept efforts aimed at weakening the standards we have undertaken. We have therefore particularly supported the draft decision on the 60th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and have co-sponsored the draft decision on strengthening the Rule of Law.

Mr. Chairman,

In conclusion let me offer our full support to the incoming Greek chairmanship and wish them every success in the equally challenging year that lies ahead of us.