

**Statement by H.E.Mr. Petras Vaitiekunas
Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Lithuania**

Thank you, Mr. Chairman,

I would like to use this opportunity to express Lithuania's appreciation of the relentless efforts by the Chairmanship in navigating us all to Helsinki. This has been a difficult year marked by tensions and tragic events. And there could have been even more disappointments and grief if our Organization would not be under such a strong guidance of you and your able team, Mr. Chairman. Swift and courageous actions undertaken by the Finnish Chairmanship in reaction to military conflict in Georgia gave us an example of true leadership which we should applaud and follow.

But unfortunately even this was not enough in order to remedy a situation when one OSCE Participating state, in breach of fundamental principles on which our Organization is based, chose to apply military actions against its fellow member of the same organization.

Our Organization is standing at the crossroads. But all the uncertainties or questions we might have about the future of the OSCE have nothing to do with Organization itself – there are no inherent deficiencies in its structure or worth mentioning weaknesses in its operations; the values, principles and philosophy of OSCE is as relevant today as they were thirty years ago. The problem lies somewhere else.

Yes, we need to renew the spirit of Helsinki, we need to reaffirm all our OSCE principles, commitments and decisions. But what we need most -- is the political will to uphold these principles, to fulfill commitments and to implement decisions.

The members of the orchestra may remain engaged in the fruitless effort of moving their chairs in a quest for the most favorable sitting arrangement, but they never will be capable of playing a good music unless they are skilled enough and know how to play it. I believe the same rule applies to us here in the OSCE – no one and nothing would help us unless we demonstrate – not only in word, but in deed - our commitment to adhere to the values and principles on which security of Europe is based.

Mr. Chairman,

The course of events of this year provided all of us with more than persuasive prove that the OSCE is more than relevant with its instruments of early warning, conflict prevention and post-conflict rehabilitation.

Unresolved conflicts present a real threat to our common security. Therefore we should re-invigorate our efforts aimed at resolving them.

But are we prepared to give a new and sincere impetus to the process by agreeing on concrete ways of action? We are of the opinion that, as the first step, we should agree to make full use of the existing OSCE instruments and by substantiating these efforts with real political will and actions on the ground.

In this regard, the OSCE missions, including the one in Georgia, play crucial role. They are ears and eyes enabling the OSCE to perform its functions more efficiently. It is our strong believe, that it is in our interests to do all what is necessary to support the OSCE mission in Georgia to make sure it can continue its work throughout the entire territory of Georgia without impediments. At present the OSCE mission's activities are much needed in Georgia, especially in the occupied areas which are outside the control of Georgian authorities and where civilian population is suffering at most.

I believe we all understand very well: there will be no just and lasting solution until commitments made under the August 12 and September 8 Agreements are fulfilled and the principles of Georgia's sovereignty and territorial integrity respected.

Mr. Chairman,

This year we celebrate the 60th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Our commitments in human dimension, in particular the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, are at the heart of this Organization. Today we should reconfirm in full OSCE commitments in this regard as well as reiterate obligation of each and every participating state to respect human rights and dignity of its citizens. Any attempts to water-down our commitments to the rights contained in the Universal Declaration or eschew obligations in this field would cause a deep split in the foundation on which this Organization is build. This would poison the "spirit of Helsinki".

OSCE can substantially contribute to the consolidation of human rights, democracy and rule of law. We value and support the ODIHR's work, as we believe that independence of this competent and unbiased institution should be preserved and strengthened. We encourage participating States to cooperate with ODIHR and fulfill their human rights commitments, including those related to the free and fair elections. Indeed, only on the basis of responsibilities of States toward each other and of governments towards their people we could build sustainable security in the OSCE region.

Mr. Chairman,

This week is rich with other important high level gatherings and they do reflect upon our deliberations in Helsinki. In Oslo, just to mention one, a solemn signing ceremony of the new Cluster Munitions Convention - legally binding

international instrument putting a total ban on this type of weaponry – has been hold. We believe that the principles and obligations of international humanitarian law should receive a greater prominence also in OSCE pol-mil dimension. Efforts to further improve the implementation of the OSCE Code of Conduct on Politico Military Aspects of Security should be acknowledge and further encouraged while stressing important obligations that are enshrined in this OSCE document, with regard to international humanitarian law, and by which we all are bound.

Cyber-terrorism is an increasingly dangerous threat to national and international security. OSCE provides for a right platform for a comprehensive approach to cyber-security. Therefore we believe that maintaining this topic on the OSCE agenda is important.

Mr. Chairman,

As Lithuania will take on the OSCE Chairmanship in the year 2011, we appreciate the initiative of Finnish Chairmanship on the engagement of the participating States holding the OSCE Chairmanships in the years up to and including 2011. This informal interaction of 5 successive Chairmanships has already contributed to the continuity, effectiveness and longer-term planning of the OSCE work and has a good potential to do so in the future.

In conclusion, I would like to express my appreciation and strong support to the incoming Greek Chairmanship. I understand we having another difficult year before us and I wish to my Greek colleague best of success.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman