

**Statement by H.E. Mr. Kassym-Jomart Tokayev,  
Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan  
at the 14<sup>th</sup> OSCE Ministerial Council  
(Brussels, 4 December 2006)**

**Dear Mr. Chairman,  
Dear colleagues,  
Ladies and gentlemen,**

It is my pleasure and privilege to express sincere gratitude to the Belgian Chairmanship and personally to Minister Karel de Gucht for commendable work conducted during the year and outstanding organization of the Ministerial Council here in Brussels. Let me also welcome the upcoming Spanish Chairmanship and wish Minister Miguel Ángel Moratinos every success in his highly responsible mission ahead.

Last year in Ljubljana we all talked on the need to reform our Organization to strengthen its effectiveness and authority, enhance its operational potential and capability.

The high values, principles and standards of the OSCE are undisputable. All of us are committed to them and Kazakhstan is not an exception. However, approaches as well as stereotypes left from the Cold War era unfortunately still exist. They have to be forgotten. Together we are to transform our forum into the full-fledged organization, capable of preventing dividing lines and disparities, promoting better understanding and credibility among all participating States. We proceed from the firm belief that the OSCE is a forum of equal rights and opportunities, where everyone's opinion is duly respected.

As to Kazakhstan we have made the first step in implementing a road map of reforms as we agreed upon the Rules of Procedure, which is a landmark decision in the history of the OSCE.

Kazakhstan is convinced that the issue of the OSCE guidance is an integral element of the reforming process dedicated to our common goal – to make the Organization strong and effective in face of the growing number of challenges and threats.

Therefore we strongly believe that Kazakhstan is eligible to chair the OSCE. Our bid for 2009 rests on the real achievements in economic reforms, political transformations, rooting democratic values, upholding the rule of law and good governance. At this Ministerial meeting we have no intention to agree with the proposal to postpone our bid to the year of 2011.

The role and functioning of the State Commission on democratic reforms have been warmly welcomed worldwide for instance during recent visits of the President abroad. The first results of this Commission's activity define the essence of our further steps to bring political process in Kazakhstan in line with the expectations of our people and the highest international standards.

In accordance with ODIHR recommendations new amendments to the electoral legislation remove controversial restrictions on public assemblies. 30 per cent of local authorities have been recently elected as a part of a wider program on the development of local self-governance. That also includes deliberations on appropriate draft law that are going on in the Parliament. Another much expected step is the improvement of the media legislation – the topic that is now being actively raised by the law makers.

We envisage significant empowerment of the Parliament to ensure wider representation and enhancement of democracy in general. According to our strategy NGOs will emerge as major players on the political arena.

I would like to assure that this policy will be continued and expanded. President Nazarbayev will soon issue a special statement covering these and many other issues, so the year 2007 is going to be crucial for eventual success of our long-term strategy. It is our choice, our priority and our aspiration impossible to suppress. Taking this opportunity I wish to assure the international community, all OSCE participating States that Kazakhstan's strategy of building up democracy and civil society will never change in any circumstances.

The Kazakhstan's government spares no efforts in sustaining high living standards of our multiethnic people, protecting peace and stability, maintaining accord and harmony, developing a free and democratic society.

We have great assets to share with participating States as well as valuable advantages to contribute to the OSCE activities. If elected as Chairman-in-Office, Kazakhstan would be ready to streamline OSCE endeavours on the most pressing issues of its agenda:

promoting security and stability in the vast Eurasian region, advancing OSCE goals in our part of the world;

sharing experience and practices in maintaining tolerance and accord in inter-ethnic and inter-cultural relations, where Kazakhstan is hailed as a model;

We are to promote coherence of the OSCE and real balance among all three dimensions in the activity of the organization, while not damaging the human dimension which is extremely important.

All these arguments deserve to be taken into thorough and impartial consideration. I believe participating States will make their decision with regard to our Presidency with due respect to the principles of equality we all stand for in this Organization.

Kazakhstan is grateful to all countries, including those from CIS and EU for their support to our candidacy.

I am confident we all advocate united and efficient Organization where we might come up with common vision and position on how to tackle the most serious challenges as religious extremism, illegal drug trafficking, trafficking in human beings, organized crime, manifestations of intolerance.

The potential of the OSCE remains high. It has reliable conflict-prevention and confidence-building toolkit to be strengthened and properly applied. Standing on the crossroads of outlining the future of the Organization, we should not miss the opportunity to choose the right path to move on.

Thank you.