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**REPORT BY
MRS. MARA MARINAKI, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF
GREECE TO THE OSCE AND CHAIRPERSON OF THE CONTACT
GROUP WITH THE OSCE MEDITERRANEAN PARTNERS FOR
CO-OPERATION AT THE OSCE**

Helsinki Ministerial Council, 4–5 December 2008

Ministers,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to begin by expressing my warmest thanks to all the OSCE Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation for their continuous engagement in the OSCE, through their active participation and their contributions to the OSCE's debate, throughout this year. We have strived to remain true to the commitments undertaken since the beginning of our Chairmanship of the OSCE Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation by stimulating interesting and provoking discussions in all three dimensions.

The 2008 Rolling Schedule regarding the Agendas of the Contact Groups, as well as the Agenda of the 2008 Mediterranean Conference demonstrate our willingness to maintain the principle of "cross-dimensionality", while achieving a balance among the three dimensions of the OSCE.

To date the Contact Group has held seven meetings on a regular basis, with an additional one scheduled to take place in December. Moreover, in line with the Ministerial Declaration on the OSCE partners for Co-operation (MC.DOC/1/07, 30 November 2007), we convened, on 25th of July 2008, the Second Joint Meeting of the Contact Groups with the Mediterranean and Asian Partners, which constitutes an appropriate forum for exchanging views and ideas on issues of common interest.

Please allow me to refer briefly to some of the issues on which we have exchanged opinions and ideas during these past seven Meetings.

As far as the first dimension is concerned, the Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation had the opportunity to be informed in depth, by the Hungarian Permanent Representative, Ambassador Dr. György Molnár, Chairman of the Security Committee, about the work of the Committee on regular security-related matters, such as border security and

management, anti-terrorism activities, police-related activities, including issues related to non-military aspects of security, as well as about the organization of the Annual Security Review Conference, held in Vienna, on 1–2 July 2008.

In addition, Mr. Misa Kangaste, Lieutenant Commander, Chair of the FSC, presented the Mediterranean Partners, FSC's and Chairmanship's priorities, stressing the unique place of the FSC to debate all European security issues, underlying that its mandate should be fully utilized, calling the Partners for closer dialogue between the FSC and the Partner Countries on the Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspect of Security (FSC Decision 01/08).

With regard to the second dimension, the Mediterranean Partners had a lively exchange of views with the Co-ordinator of OSCE's Economic and Environmental Activities on economic and environmental issues Mr. Bernard Snoy, with a focus on the Follow-up to the Valencia and Rabat Seminars of December 2007, which had provided the opportunity for discussion on sensitive issues such as desertification, management of water resources and migration.

As regards the Follow-up to the Valencia Seminar, organized on 10–11 December 2007, under the Spanish Chairmanship, in co-operation with NATO, Mr. Snoy emphasized the importance of implementing a survey or an assessment on water scarcity, land degradation, desertification and security in the Mediterranean Region. He recommended the launch of an international initiative similar to the example of ENVSEC (Environmental and Security Initiative), which would be aimed at addressing environmental risks to security and fostering stability, through environmental co-operation. Throughout the Launch Seminar and Follow-up in Rabat, on 12–13 December 2007, the OSCE Participating States and Southern Mediterranean Countries conducted a constructive dialogue on the challenges of developing effective labour migration policies in destination, transit and origin countries, as well as on the importance of protection of migrant workers, with a focus on the needs of female migrant workers.

As for the third dimension, several discussions were held on issues ranging from the freedom of the media and tolerance and non-discrimination, to trafficking in human beings and gender issues.

The Special Representative for Combating Trafficking against Human Beings, Ms. Eva Biaudet, called the relevant actors at national and international level to step up their efforts, in order to tackle trafficking in human beings through data collection, information analysis and a self-reporting mechanism on both shores of the Mediterranean, simultaneously welcoming the progress that has been made to-date in some Mediterranean States. The Senior Adviser on Gender Issues, Ms. Jamila Seftaoui, addressing the Contact Group, highlighted the linkage between gender equality and security and stability, while focusing on different possible areas of co-operation with the Mediterranean Partners, such as the implementation of mechanisms to protect women's rights, the prevention of gender-based violence and trafficking, a gender-sensitive labour migration policy, gender-mainstreaming in the police, civil society, governments and private sectors.

Also, the Personal Representative of the CiO on Combating Intolerance and Discrimination against Muslims, Ambassador Ömür Orhun, in his address to the Contact Group of 21st November 2008, emphasized the need for creating confidence between immigrants Muslim communities and mainstream communities, as well as between the

Muslim World and the Western World. He also stressed that international and national standards and norms do exist, but that they will have to be implemented, through solidarity, integration and dialogue with a view to building bridges and partnerships of equals among different segments of societies. Moreover, he invited the Mediterranean Partners to offer their support to the three Representatives of the CiO in their work.

In all of these issues, the Mediterranean Partners demonstrated a genuine interest, and contributed, by expressing their own perspectives and suggestions, to addressing all these challenges to security.

In line with the Madrid Ministerial Declaration on the OSCE Partners for Co-operation, the Greek Chair has concentrated its efforts on the implementation of the provisions pertaining to the abovementioned Declaration for the enhancement of co-operation with the Partners. More specifically, in order to reflect the deeper and more meaningful engagement by the Mediterranean Partners in the OSCE, and also in line with the tradition established with the Asian Partners, the Greek Chairmanship of the Mediterranean Group initiated the upgrading of the annual event with the Mediterranean Partners to be renamed “OSCE Mediterranean Conference”.

Within the scope of strengthening relations with the Mediterranean and Asian Partners for Co-operation, we welcomed the establishment of the Partnership Fund and provided a substantial contribution in March, when we sponsored a Seminar for Young Diplomats from all the Mediterranean Partners and the Quintet countries, which took place in June in Athens and in Vienna. This was the first project to be funded by this Fund. The first part was hosted by the Greek Diplomatic Academy, and provided 40 participants from the Mediterranean Partners and the Quintet countries with the opportunity to exchange ideas on European security issues and the broader development of the European security architecture. The second part, held in Vienna, provided the participants with the opportunity to learn in detail the scope and extent of the OSCE’s approach to security, both the doctrine and its practical implementation. It was an excellent opportunity for us to facilitate interaction among young diplomats throughout the Mediterranean. We are also working closely with the ATU on organizing a Workshop on Supply Chain Security in the Mediterranean ports, which will again be funded through the Greek contribution to the Partnership Fund.

This year’s highlight has been the organization of the 2008 Mediterranean Conference themed “The OSCE approach to regional security — a model for the Mediterranean”, which was held in Amman, on 27 and 28 of October 2008. We would like to express our deepest gratitude to the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan for its excellent hospitality and for its strong commitment to holding a Conference which stimulated a lively debate on crucial security issues.

We deemed it necessary to prepare an agenda which would reflect OSCE’s “comprehensive approach” to security, while maintaining the principle of “cross-dimensionality” as a basis for any discussion. Given the cross-dimensional character of the Conference, the conclusions reached encompass all three dimensions of the Organization, in accordance to the spirit and the essence of the OSCE principles, in the field of anti-terrorism, CSBMs, water scarcity, land degradation and desertification in the Mediterranean Region, combating intolerance and non-discrimination.

More specifically, in the field of CSBMs, their crucial role in establishing mutual trust, transparency and predictability in the OSCE area was highlighted. At the same time, participants discussed the usefulness of adopting regional CSBMs in the Mediterranean region, tailor-made for its specific needs, applicable on a voluntary basis, and developed in an incremental way. The adoption of regional CSBMs would complement international efforts for a genuine and result-oriented Peace Process in the Middle East, while establishing an atmosphere of trust and openness with a view to creating a more conducive climate for negotiations in the region.

With regards to terrorism, the United Nations, on the basis the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy (2006), together with the OSCE, as a regional arrangement under Chapter VIII of the UN Charter, provide the global framework for an enhanced international co-operation in the fight against terrorism. OSCE's contribution consists in providing assistance to Participating States and the Mediterranean Partners in specific fields such as the promotion of the international legal framework against terrorism, the enhancement of legal co-operation in criminal matters, the improvement of passport and travel document security, the enhancement of container security as well as the combating of financing of terrorism. Undoubtedly, besides the contribution of International Organizations to the fight against terrorism, the active engagement of other actors, such as the civil society and the business community - through the promotion of the Public Private Partnership —, is required. In addition, participants agreed that there is not only a military solution to terrorist activity; therefore, a “cross-dimensional” approach is necessary in order to address both the phenomenon and its underlying causes.

On issues of the Second dimension, water scarcity, land degradation and desertification in the Mediterranean region and the impact of environmental issues on security were analyzed. Some Partners presented their national policies in addressing environmental challenges in their respective countries. The phenomenon of globalization has led to the creation of a new kind of “bipolar” world, where the less advanced are facing military conflicts, population growth, food crisis, desertification and drought. In particular, in the Mediterranean Region, political tensions and long-standing conflicts endanger regional security and environment, thus, becoming an obstacle to development. They mentioned, among other, the use of renewable and alternative energy sources as a way ahead. Nevertheless, they stressed that even environmental-friendly policies are not fully deprived of environmental burdens. The Mediterranean Region has been seriously affected by the phenomenon of global warming with a significant impact on environment — water scarcity, desertification, land degradation, rural poverty, irreversible loss of biodiversity — and, consequently, on security. To that end, both, Partners and Participating States, agreed on the need for enhanced cooperation, at regional and interstate level, aiming at sharing the natural resources of the area. They further stressed the need for sharing expertise and best practices as well as for transferring of technology.

With regard to the Human dimension, the implementation of the OSCE commitments on combating intolerance and non-discrimination, by utilizing the appropriate tools developed by the OSCE, remains a priority. Moreover, the contribution of civil society and national human rights institutions was duly acknowledged in the debate. The need to bridge the gap between traditional cultural patterns and modernized societies, including women's rights in education was noted. Religion was pinpointed as the enemy of exclusion and discrimination, while its important role in the establishment of peace was highlighted.

Additionally on the eve of the Conference, a Side Event on the topic “Co-operation with Mediterranean civil society and NGOs in promoting tolerance and non-discrimination” was held, which has also been financed by the Partnership Fund. The organization of this event was aimed at promoting more constructive dialogue between representatives of OSCE Participating States, Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation and NGOs on the implementation of OSCE commitments in the field of tolerance and non-discrimination, while strengthening the capacity of various actors of civil society to exchange information and best practices and also to share their practical experience with other regional and international NGOs.

In conclusion, I would like to say that we had a very busy and intensive year. In a month, we will pass the torch to the incoming Kazakh Chair taking the lead of a vibrant, dynamic and committed group, such as the Mediterranean Contact Group. With the full support of the incoming Greek Chairmanship, I have full confidence that the Kazakh Chair will further build on past achievements and promote even more the co-operation with our Mediterranean Partners to the benefit of both the OSCE and the Mediterranean region.