



PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF LATVIA TO THE UN,
OSCE AND OTHER INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS IN VIENNA

**Statement by Mr. Ilgvars Klava, Political Director of the Ministry of Foreign
Affairs of the Republic of Latvia at the OSCE Ministerial Council, 4th
December 2006, Brussels**

Mr. Chairman,

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me first express our appreciation to the Belgian Government for the warm hospitality here in Brussels. I would also like to commend Belgian Chairmanship, all the members of your OSCE team, for the excellent leadership and for the dedicated work throughout 2006.

Let me also express my pleasure on the OSCE becoming organization of 56 Participating States. We welcome Montenegro to the organization.

While fully subscribing to the statement made on behalf of the European Union, I would like to express our views on some issues, which we consider being of high importance.

Mr. Chairman,

Through the years and decades the OSCE has worked out and developed its platform for advancing the cause of human freedom.

It makes an important contribution to security and stability in Europe as well as to strengthening the rule of law. It plays an essential role in conflict prevention, crisis management and confidence-building.

The OSCE has created forms and mechanisms of cooperation strongly based in all three its dimensions. We should continue to apply actively all three dimensions in achieving the OSCE goals.

We emphasize that full compliance and implementation of the political-military commitments by all the participating States is important for reliable security and stability in the OSCE area.

It is clear that OSCE has to evolve in order to be able to respond to new challenges. At the same time all the OSCE Participating States have to stand firm in contributing decisively to conflict prevention, protection of human rights and promotion of democratic development all around the OSCE area.

We would like to reiterate our perception of energy security being an issue where the OSCE has to play a role. Discussion within the OSCE could contribute to long-term, mutually beneficial co-operation in the energy field including environmental security. The increasing energy interdependence between producing, consuming and transit countries within the OSCE area

needs to be addressed by strengthened dialogue and international cooperation to promote global energy security.

Mr. Chairman,

The OSCE plays an essential role in finding solutions to the frozen conflicts. All Participating States share this responsibility. We are concerned by the persistence of unresolved conflicts in the OSCE area. They generate instability and hinder development and co-operation in the region.

The fulfillment of the Istanbul commitments remains important factor in finding solution for the frozen conflicts. We welcome the progress made by the Russian Federation towards fulfillment of the outstanding Istanbul commitments with respect to Georgia. The process requires to be completed.

Latvia fully supports sovereignty and territorial integrity of Georgia. We are concerned about tensions in Georgian Russian relations and regret the measures taken by the Russian Federation against Georgia. We urge to settle all disputed issues through dialogue.

We support peaceful resolution of conflicts in Georgia and consider, that practical measures designated to alleviate tensions and build confidence between the separatists and the central government are necessary. Those measures may include demilitarization steps by South Ossetia authorities, increased number of OSCE monitors, economic rehabilitation projects.

Latvia fully supports sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Moldova. We call for resumption of 5+2 talks boycotted by Transdnistrian authorities. EU Border assistance mission on the Moldova-Ukrainian border have contributed significantly to restore legal commercial activities in Transdnistria. Latvia actively participates in this project. We consider, that replacement of current peacekeeping forces in the Transdnistrian region by multinational forces would increase chances to settle the conflict. We also call on the Russian Federation to resume and complete the withdrawal of its military forces from the Republic of Moldova and fulfill outstanding Istanbul commitments.

Very important changes are taking place in Western Balkan states. This year was crucial for countries of the region. Latvia highly values the OSCE engagement and input in Kosovo and sees the OSCE continuing playing important role in the support of the peaceful, democratic and multi-ethnic Kosovo.

Mr. Chairman,

We should preserve first and foremost the OSCE commitments shared by our 56 countries in the field of all forms of intolerance. There is no possible compromise as far as anti-Semitism, xenophobia and racism is concerned. There is a need for the OSCE to strengthen its work in combating discrimination on all grounds. Latvia welcomes the initiative taken by Romania to host in Bucharest in 2007 a conference on anti-Semitism and other forms of intolerance as a follow up of Cordoba conference.

Another area of OSCE work to which Latvia is particularly committed is combating the trafficking in human beings. This form of contemporary slavery affects all Participating States. Important documents adopted previously as well as in this Ministerial Council reaffirm OSCE commitments to fight this crime.

Latvia would like to reaffirm the important role, expertise and experience of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, especially in the field of election observation. My own country hosted a Limited OSCE Observation Mission at Saeima elections in October this

year. We are pleased with a positive evaluation expressed by this highly respective OSCE institution in its Preliminary Report.

Mr. Chairman,

Last Ministerial Council with the decision on a roadmap launched the process of strengthening the effectiveness of the Organization. We have the impression that our joint efforts are progressing well. We welcome ODIHR Report to the Ministerial Council. It is comprehensive and well-balanced document, clearly reflecting our overall situation in human dimension and underlining importance of implementation of the commitments. Here, in Brussels, we have to approve the started course so that in continuation it leads to the further strengthening of the OSCE. We look forward to working in a constructive spirit with all other delegations to advance this important work.

One of the OSCE`s strengths is its close co-operation with other international organizations. We should continue to deepen the OSCE`s traditional areas of activity by seeking new synergies wherever possible, especially with UN, Council of Europe and European Union.

Latvia supports Kazakhstan`s bid for Chairmanship in the OSCE.

In conclusion I would like to thank you, Mr. Chairman, for your tremendous personal dedication and for your professional skill. I wish the future Spanish Chairman in Office every success in tackling the tasks ahead.

Thank you.