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Conference Services

At the request of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia the attached statement by H.E. Ilinka Mitreva, Minister of Foreign Affairs, delivered to the 13th Meeting of the OSCE Ministerial Council on 6 December 2005 is being distributed to all OSCE delegations.

**XIII Meeting of the OSCE Ministerial Council
Ljubljana 5-6 December 2005**

**Address by
Her Excellency Dr. Ilinka Mitreva
Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Macedonia**

Mr. Chairman,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me begin by joining previous speakers in congratulating you on the results achieved during your Chairmanship. Dear Dimitrij, your tireless efforts and vision have contributed to building genuine partnership and frank dialogue among Participating States and to advancing visibility of the Organization.

This year has indeed been a year of serious and in-depth analysis and debates about the future of our Organization. It has been marked with the anniversaries of events, such as the adoption of the Helsinki Final Act and the Paris Charter for a new Europe, which played a prominent role in building a secure, peaceful and changed Europe.

Dear Colleagues,

This is an important period for the OSCE, as after all for other international organizations, which are in the process of reassessing and redefining their roles. The common aim is to better cope with the challenges of the changing world. This is an important period for Participating States, as well. We have shown determination to enhance our mutual confidence and sense of common purpose, irrespective of the differences of positions established or reaffirmed in our political dialogue.

All of us present here believe in the relevance of this organization. Therefore this meeting is an excellent opportunity to bring our views closer and identify short and long term measures to enhance the efficiency and coherence of our actions. The Report of

the Panel of Eminent Persons, the assessments and recommendations contained in it, are expected to fuel our discussions and provide guidance for our future work. Our shared goal is efficient implementation of commitments in all the three dimensions and of demanding tasks ahead of us.

Mr. Chairman,

What is the OSCE's comparative advantage, we have to further work on?

Owing to its cooperative and multidimensional approach to security, the OSCE remains one of the pillars of the Euro-Atlantic security architecture. We are aware of the achievements, but we also agree that reform is necessary in order that the OSCE remains a relevant forum for political and security dialogue.

The key advantage of the OSCE is the Organization's flexibility and promptness of reaction to emerging challenges and crises of various types. Therefore, I believe that any reform must take due care not to undermine this fundamental value.

The OSCE and its institutions continue to be among the key instruments of early warning, conflict prevention, crisis management and post-conflict rehabilitation. In this context, field missions have a vital role and therefore we need to continue working on advancing their performances. As a country who benefited from the OSCE engagement, I would like to underline the valuable role of the OSCE in the Balkans.

Mr. Chairman,

Today, we will adopt a number of decisions giving added value to our common efforts and hopefully agree on issues that require further consideration and discussions.

Many of the decisions will be implemented in close cooperation with our partner organizations, the UN, EU, NATO, the Council of Europe and others. Let me underline, in this regard, that we need to further improve complementarity of actions and capitalize on strengths of each of them, avoiding overlaps and duplication of efforts.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The atrocious acts of terrorism, which have unfortunately continued this year, have strengthened our determination to deal with this evil. We have developed practical and efficient actions to intensify the campaign against terrorism, reflected in the decisions to be adopted today. But let us not forget that promotion and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms is part of our campaign that sends a strong message to those who have an utterly different goal - to undermine them.

Mr. Chairman,

The lake of Ohrid is not just a symbol of the Macedonian model of functional democracy in a multiethnic society- of the road Macedonia has passed from “stabilization” towards accession to the European structures. It is a town becoming the symbol of regional cooperation, of the new spirit of partnership, solidarity and friendship in the Balkans. Another good news from the region is that a few days ago, I hosted a meeting of five foreign ministers from the region and the Austrian Foreign Minister Plasnik. We discussed our European future. But we also discussed the pressing issue of visa liberalization regime.

Speaking about the European future, less than a month ago the European Commission adopted a unanimous recommendation that the Republic of Macedonia fulfills the conditions for candidate status for fully-fledged membership of the European Union. This recommendation is a recognition that we have assiduously worked on our clear European agenda. There are, of course, a number of areas

where we have to significantly improve our performance, but we have a plan how to reach the desired goal, and we have the capacity and unyielding will to fully implement it. I am convinced that this month, the European Council will accept the assessment of the European Commission and will grant the Republic of Macedonia the merited status of EU membership candidate country, for which we seek your support.

The Macedonian candidacy will send a strong political signal to other countries in the Region, that by hard and persistent work the perspectives for EU membership become reality. The European Union has invested greatly in the Stabilisation and Association Process, as the SAP countries themselves, too. I believe you will agree that in light of the pending resolution of certain open issues in the Balkans, it is indeed important that the EU once again concretely demonstrates and confirms its commitments to implementing the Thessalonica Agenda.

Mr. Chairman,

This two-day debate has reaffirmed our dedication to the fundamental values and principals of the OSCE. It has also shown that our vision of a united Europe, in which the shared values of democracy, rule of law and human rights will prevail, provide a strong motivation for our efforts to adequately respond to the present and to the challenges to come.

Mr. Chairman,

In conclusion, let me wish much success to the incoming chair-friendly Belgium - and assure them of our support in carrying out the complex tasks ahead of us.

Thank you.