



REPUBLIC OF ALBANIA  
MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Address

by H.E. Mr. Edmond Panariti, Minister of Foreign Minister  
of the Republic of Albania,  
as delivered at the 19<sup>th</sup> Ministerial Meeting of the OSCE,  
Dublin 6-7 December 2012

Thank you Mr. Chairperson,  
Excellencies,  
Distinguished Heads of Delegation,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

I am pleased and honored to take part in the proceedings of the 19<sup>th</sup> OSCE Ministerial Meeting. On behalf of the Delegation of Albania I wish to express gratitude to our Irish friends for their warm welcome and generous hospitality. As this Chairmanship draws to a close, I should like to commend Ireland for its resolve and tireless work.

I should also like to extend a warm welcome in our midst to Mongolia, as the newest OSCE participating State. We congratulate Mongolia for committing to the core values of the OSCE and its comprehensive concept of security, which remain as valid as ever. We would hope that this and other future accessions from within the OSCE area will provide fresh points of view to our common work.

Distinguished Colleagues,

The “Helsinki +40” Process is likely to be remembered as the trademark of this Chairmanship and one of its main legacies. We congratulate Ireland for launching the idea and welcome the intention of the three incoming Chairs to work together in this framework with the aim to instill a strategic and multiyear perspective to the work of the OSCE. This should provide for the pursuit of medium-term priorities in a synchronized and result-oriented fashion. It should take stock of what the OSCE has achieved in these 37 years, namely its capability to successfully withstand the test of time, to set a comprehensive body of norms, principles and commitments and to develop autonomous institutions and field missions, which assist participating States in consolidating the rule of law, functioning democratic institutions as well as protecting human and minority rights.

If it is to preserve its relevance in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the OSCE should stick to the main features of its identity, strive for full implementation of common commitments, and not to embark into sweeping reforms that might alter its current structure, flexibility and decision making processes.

Mr. Chairperson,

Consolidating gains in the human dimension is of critical importance to support the principle enshrined in the Helsinki Final Act that security among states depends upon respect for human rights within states. Therefore my country fully endorses the approval of the draft Ministerial Declaration on fundamental freedoms in the Digital Age and the draft decisions on media freedom, on combating racism and xenophobia as well as freedom of peaceful assembly and expression.

In the Security Dimension, Albania appreciates the efforts of Ireland to finalize of the package of decisions in the fight against transnational threats left over by the Vilnius Ministerial. Despite the progress registered this year, it is incumbent upon us to complete the remaining work by establishing confidence building measures in the cyberspace, adopting the Counter Terrorism Framework and the *chapeau* MC decision proposed by the Chair. These would certainly contribute to further consolidate the mandate of the OSCE in the fight against transnational threats.

Albania's key priority in the Second Dimension aims at fostering good-governance and anti-corruption. We believe firmly that expanding the OSCE's *acquis* in this field will benefit all participating States, by fostering economic growth, increasing tax revenue and stimulating investment.

I also wish to emphasize that during this year Albania has strived to contribute to the implementation of the Vilnius Ministerial Council Decisions on Afghanistan and the Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation. Strengthening interaction between the latter and the various International Organization in Europe is a matter of key priority for Albania, as demonstrated by the concrete initiatives undertaken by the Albanian Chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe. More specifically, we have offered financial support for the OSCE projects on Afghanistan, and used various OSCE fora to share with the countries of the Arab Spring our experience on transition to democracy. As the Organization prepares to implement specific project in support of our Mediterranean Partners, Albania stands ready to offer its share of contribution.

In the field of tolerance and non-discrimination, Albania has reiterated its offer to host the next high level Conference on this important topic for the OSCE of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. This will provide a valuable opportunity to take up the challenges facing us in this field. We stand ready to work with the incoming Chairmanship, participating States and the ODIHR to adopt an OSCE decision and to make this event happen in 2013.

Distinguished Colleagues,

The role of the OSCE in further consolidating peace, stability and democracy in the Western Balkans deserves recognition. The facilitation of Serbian Elections in Kosovo in May this year stands out as vivid example of the OSCE's successful contribution to this end. However, as current financial constrains continue and the region edges closer to the EU, the situation where 60% of the OSCE budget for field operations is spent in the Western Balkans Missions, can be hardly sustained. While supporting a focused footprint of the OSCE in the region, in areas of core OSCE strengths, Albania will endeavor for a gradual and realistic reduction of these budgets.

Turning to Kosovo, I wish to express our satisfaction for the resumption of the high-level dialogue with Serbia under the auspices of EU's High Representative for Foreign and Security Policy. This is a much-awaited step that should lead to the normalization of relations between the two countries. We encourage the continuation of *bona fide* dialogue between the two sides, to solving practical issues and fully implementing the agreements reached so far. These provide for, *inter alia*, Kosovo's participation in international and regional fora. Towards this end, we wish to see increased participation of Kosovo also in the OSCE, in line with the rules of procedure. Giving Kosovo a voice in the planning phases and the discussions of the activities of OMIK would surely increase the effectiveness of OMIK's work and would not undermine the status neutrality of this Organization.

Finally, Mr. Chair, let me congratulate Ukraine upon the assumption of their Chairmanship-in-Office in the coming year and wish them well in their endeavours. Ukraine can count on our support for the pursuit of their ambitious priorities. We look forward to closely cooperate with the incoming Chair in Vienna and Kiev on all issues of interest to us and the Organization.

Thank You Mr. Chairperson.