

15<sup>th</sup> OSCE Ministerial Council Meeting

Madrid, 29-30 November 2007

Statement by H. E. Mr. Urmas Paet

Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Estonia

Mr. Chairman,

Since Estonia fully subscribes to the statement delivered by the foreign minister of Portugal on behalf of the European Union, let me emphasize just some elements of the OSCE's present security agenda.

The OSCE, as a forum for building a secure Europe, is as relevant today as it was when the fundamental freedoms were set out in the Helsinki Final Act. It is the strength of these democratic values and the power of their practice that consolidates European peace and security.

A key role in the sustaining and monitoring of a healthy democracy is played by the **free media**. Thus, Estonia firmly supports the promoting and advancing of a free, pluralistic, and independent media and the work of the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media.

Estonia also highly appreciates the role of the **ODIHR** as a unique and internationally recognised expert mechanism for election monitoring. There is a saying, one should not shoot the messenger. Any attempt to

weaken the ODIHR, or to reduce its ability to carry out its mission, undermines the effectiveness of the OSCE, and should be clearly rejected.

While it might, sometimes, be tempting to flog the past in a bid to stave off real challenges, we should choose to look forward and build upon what we have already achieved. I sincerely believe that true democracy, fair elections, and a vibrant media are among our closest allies, as well as the best guarantees for the security of any country, just as they are for our entire region.

Mr. Chairman,

Given its comprehensive approach to security, the OSCE has to also address ascending challenges, such as **cyber security**. In an increasingly computerised world, cyber criminals lurking in the Internet may disable advanced information systems or local emergency services by using various computer network operations. Cyber attacks make it possible to paralyse whole societies almost immediately, and from far away.

Nevertheless, these threats tend to be taken not as seriously as they should be, since it is often, mistakenly, believed that they threaten just highly sophisticated information systems. Estonia has acquired valuable actual experience in fighting various cyber crimes, and we are ready to share our knowledge and expertise.

While the combating of these modern threats requires also international efforts, we call upon the OSCE countries to accede to the Convention on Cyber Crime of the Council of Europe, which is open for accession for non-members of the Council as well.

But, of course, even in cyber warfare, our actions should never become an excuse for restricting universally recognised human rights and liberties.

And finally, Estonia does not find that the main problems with resolving some major issues in the OSCE area lie in the inefficiency of the organisation as such. Rather, it is some individual member states' lack of a political will, and determination to fulfil their commitments, that prevent the resolution of the **frozen conflicts**, and other matters of the utmost importance.

In conclusion, I would like to thank our Spanish colleagues for their very efficient and productive chairmanship, and wish every success for Finland in the coming year.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.