



**STATEMENT BY H.E. MR. STAVROS DIMAS,
MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS
OF GREECE
AT THE 18TH OSCE MINISTERIAL COUNCIL,
VILNIUS, 6 DECEMBER 2011**

Mr. Chairperson, Distinguished Ministers, Excellences, Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. First of all, I would like to congratulate our host, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Lithuania, for holding the 18th OSCE Ministerial Council Meeting in this welcoming corner of Northern Europe with such a warm hospitality.

2. We, in Greece, see the Vilnius Ministerial as an opportunity and a challenge at the same time.

In times of worldwide financial turbulences, violent uprisings and growing environmental challenges, it is an opportunity to shape further, with concrete undertaking, the vision of a genuine Security Community we embraced in the Astana 2010 Summit after an open and intensive dialogue that was launched in Corfu in 2009;

It is also a challenge because the Security Community is taking shape while differences between participating States still persist, which requires reinforced efforts to identify commonality of purpose, strengthen shared values and relieve our dialogue from all remnants of security perception belonging to another era.

3. We have no other choice than supporting and taking concrete steps towards transforming our security space into a Security Community, where we build security with and not against each other.

Putting our own house in order is a precondition for the security in Europe and the security of Europe, in its broader sense.

What we need is less unilateralism and more effective multilateralism,

We also need less polarization and broader partnerships with clear rules of the game under the umbrella of the international law and without double standards.

4. I wish to recall that the Corfu Process launched in 2009, during the Greek OSCE Chairmanship, did serve as a compass, guiding us through the alleys of an open, transparent and inclusive dialogue that used the cooperative advantages of OSCE as a platform for dialogue and cooperation and served well the sense of commonality of purpose.

Greece is convinced that while preserving the spirit of and the experience gained through the Corfu process, we have to make full use of the OSCE structures and tools to strengthen the concept of indivisible, comprehensive and cooperative security, identify problems, understand others' perceptions, iron out differences and search commonly acceptable solutions.

5. In practice, however, our tools have proven too cumbersome and ineffective for prompt use, and political will was not always present when most needed.

Enhancing the Organization's capabilities in addressing conflicts and crises is a very important endeavour that will allow us not only to react promptly and adequately, but also to preserve the credibility and consistency of OSCE mediation efforts and engagement in post-conflict rehabilitation.

6. Although it is becoming evident that the international community has to reach a level of collective maturity which will not allow the modernization of its Security System to be held hostage by regional divergences and conflicts, regional security challenges cannot be overlooked, ignored or even pushed under the carpet.

The real test for all of us is the resolution of the conflicts themselves.

In any event and as of the moment we launched in Astana the process for the Security Community we should all commit ourselves that the threat or use of force will cease to exist, once and for all, as an option in our relations.

7. We welcome the meeting of the "5+2" format for the settlement of the Transdnistrian conflict, that took place a few days ago in Vilnius, and the political will demonstrated by all parties involved to commit themselves in seeking a lasting and comprehensive solution to the dispute with respect to territorial integrity and sovereignty of the Republic of Moldova.

We also express our support for the continuation of the Geneva Talks, as a unique forum to solve the crisis in Georgia, as well as for the efforts of the OSCE Minsk Group to promote a viable and lasting solution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

8. Since we don't live in an ideal world and we are all faced with multifaceted security challenges, military security remains important.

We firmly believe in the necessity of a legally binding conventional arms control regime in Europe. We consider it extremely important for the stability and security of the whole OSCE area. This is why we have actively been contributing in the last few years and will consistently continue doing so in the future, in order to resolve problems and promote solutions in this particular area.

9. We are particularly pleased by the process taking place in the Forum for Security Co-operation of updating and modernizing the Confidence and Security Building Measures of the Vienna Document.

10. As new security threats appear, many of them of transnational nature, we must address, as a matter of priority, problems that could lead to social unrest and disrupt normal life.

Many of our societies are faced with extraordinary economic hardships, unemployment and illegal migration.

Others encounter more or less directly, problems due to the scourges of terrorism and organized crime of all kinds.

Cooperation, synergy and solidarity are needed in order to collectively address them and secure that each one of us will become a safe and not a broken link in the chain of international efforts.

Especially in the area of illegal migration and migration management, which is of particular importance for my country, we believe that the OSCE can make an important contribution due to its wide membership and wide-ranging approach. In this regard, we have proposed the creation of a Network in order to implement our joint commitment to provide a broad platform for dialogue on migration issues.

11. Turning to another important issue, we believe we need to reflect on how climate change impacts security and stability in the OSCE region and what we can do

complementary to UN efforts in meeting this challenge. Our efforts to ensure environmental security must go hand-in-hand with a more efficient energy policy, at national and regional level, which places paramount priority in increasing the share of renewable energy resources in the energy mix. It goes without saying, that energy security in a broader sense can't but remain in the heart of the OSCE concept of comprehensive and cooperative security.

12. It is our firm belief that security starts with the inherent dignity of each and every individual, who should freely and peacefully enjoy his or her human rights and fundamental freedoms within societies that are governed by common democratic principles and the rule of law.

More than twenty years after the Human Dimension gained a prominent place in the OSCE's concept of security, implementation of Human Dimension commitments remains incomplete and presents a major challenge for the Organization.

We must try to remain vigilant and constantly strive to improve ourselves in order to safeguard our democracies and make our societies more fair and more open.

13. Our societies are changing, not least by technological progress, and we have to respond.

For example, information technologies and notably the Internet, can enhance our freedom of expression and even help strengthen democratic participation. Protecting free access to it and ensuring the free flow of information that it provides involves making adjustments to new realities. It is about taking advantage of new opportunities.

14. Greece recognizes the progress achieved in recent years through dialogue and cooperation with our Mediterranean and Asian partners attaching great importance to their potential contribution towards strengthening the security of the OSCE area in all three dimensions.

As we have long advocated that the security in both shores of the Mediterranean is undoubtedly interlinked, my country welcomes the political reform processes undertaken by some Southern Mediterranean States in the course of this year and stands ready to support the transfer of our Organization's expertise in any areas the states concerned may find of interest.

Greece, remaining always open to considering future applications for partnership from interested countries, welcomes Mongolia's desire to become an OSCE participating State and stands ready to support it.

15. Since its inception, the OSCE has never been a solely intergovernmental forum. Its aim was to reunify the peoples of Europe. In this effort we consider crucial the role of the Parliamentary Assembly, which brings together the elected representatives of the peoples. It is a great honour for us that the Presidency of the Parliamentary Assembly has been entrusted, for a second year, to my compatriot, friend and colleague, Petros Efthymiou. I am sure that he will continue to promote in the Parliamentary Assembly the same spirit of partnership that the Greek OSCE Chairmanship brought to the Organization in 2009.

16. As I said at the beginning of my intervention, our Meeting here in Vilnius, represents for us an opportunity and a challenge to take substantial decisions in order to pave the way for the OSCE's future role in preserving peace and stability in our region.

Let's use this opportunity and face the challenge! In this spirit,

I wish to extend my good wishes to Ireland for its upcoming Chairmanship. I am sure that under its leadership the opportunities will be grasped and,

to congratulate Switzerland and Serbia on their joint bid for the 2014 and 2015 Chairmanships that we wholeheartedly support.

Thank you.