



# **Czech Republic**

## **Fourteenth Meeting of the OSCE Ministerial Council**

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Alexandr VONDRA**

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of the Czech Republic**

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*Check against delivery*

Mr. Chairman, Mr. Secretary General, Distinguished Colleagues,

First, I wish to express my appreciation to the Belgian hosts for the hospitality and effective organization of this Ministerial Council Meeting. I would also like to commend you personally, Mr. Chairman, as well as members of your OSCE team, for relentless efforts to address a wide array of issues throughout 2006.

We fully subscribed to the statement of Finland on behalf of the European Union. Beyond it, I will add our national views on the issues of particular importance for us.

We are taking stock of what the process of the strengthening of OSCE has yielded to date. In doing so we should be honest with ourselves: the results are modest in scope and content and the continuation of the process may become self-defeating and unproductive. We agree to continue further discussing only those areas where progress is clearly attainable.

OSCE has intensified its cooperation with other international organizations - such as United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) - on issues like organized crime, drugs, terrorism and nuclear proliferation. However, in all of those areas the OSCE can play only a backup role and serve merely as a political springboard for possibly taking the work forward elsewhere. Let me be candid – the ensuing consequence is that **we tend to lose sight of and keen interest in those issues that used to be pre-eminently dealt with by the OSCE and its forerunner.** It is questionable whether this policy shift can keep generating an OSCE's added value for cooperative security in Euro-Atlantic and Euro-Asian space.

This is a fundamental question for the future of OSCE. Yet we have not arrived at a common perception of **what is to be our common purpose and responsibility** accomplished through this Organization in a **post** post-Cold War era. Without full commitment to common values and principles, the OSCE's comprehensive security concept with the human dimension in its center will further erode and its contribution to cooperative security will make no difference. The history and legacy of this Organization bind us to reverse this tendency.

We greatly value enormous contributions to stability and security throughout the OSCE region by OSCE **autonomous** institutions and field operations. (In many ways, they are a public face of the Organization.) **They are irreplaceable and indispensable instruments to foster democratization processes, to deepen respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, to prevent conflicts and crises, to promote economic and judicial reforms and much more. There is no need to substantially alter their respective *modus operandi* as they faithfully stick to the mandates we had empowered them with.**

This, too, applies to ODIHR whose report mandated last year is under our scrutiny today. Rarely before have we been presented with a report of comparable importance and grasp for the OSCE. Its **strong political message is in line with that of the Panel of Eminent Persons: the most important step towards a stronger and more relevant OSCE is a firm recommitment to standards and political commitments our leaders have signed up to since 1975.** This must be a central element of any structural response to the report. In our eyes, **there exists no national middle way, shortcut or by-pass in implementing what we all freely entered into with a view to building a free and democratic society in our countries.**

Political and social developments in Belarus have shown a reckless disregard by the political leadership of that country, **by Mr. Lukashenka**, for this ultimate goal. Blatant violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms were widespread prior to, in the course of, and in the aftermath of the 19 March presidential elections. **The efforts of the European Union, the United States and many other countries to engage Belarus on promotion of democratic development have brought no results.** The only totalitarian regime in Europe of the 21 century degrades everything that we have collectively achieved since the fall of the Iron Curtain. Yet again we call on the Government of Belarus to respect democratic values, the rule of law and human rights in the interest of its own people.

The public opinion in many OSCE countries has long associated this Organization with fruitless search of peaceful solutions to protracted conflicts in Georgia and Moldova. These conflicts hamper their political and economic transition needed to advance their declared objective of Euro-Atlantic integration. We have not seen much progress again this year in their settlement. Moreover, there have been **worrisome developments that further lowered our confidence in the effectivity of the current negotiation and peacekeeping formats and good faith of some parties involved in them.** The full respect for territorial integrity and sovereignty must remain the only basis to proceed from. The completion of Istanbul commitments of the Russian Federation would boost confidence as well as pave the way for the Adapted CFE Treaty to enter into force without further delay.

Let me conclude by wishing every success to our Spanish colleagues during their Chairmanship in 2007.