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**STATEMENT BY  
H.E. MR SAMUEL ŽBOGAR**

**MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRES**

**OSCE MINISTERIAL COUNCIL  
ATHENS, 1 -2 DECEMBER 2009**

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**ADDRESS**  
**BY THE MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA,**  
**MR SAMUEL ŽBOGAR,**  
**AT THE OSCE MINISTERIAL COUNCIL,**  
**Athens, 1 December 2009**

Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

First, I would like to extend appreciation to Greek OSCE Chairmanship as well as for warm hospitality here today and at the informal ministerial meeting in Corfu in June.

The Helsinki Final Act was signed in 1975, but it is still a living document. For the first time in history, it introduced the concept of human rights into our understanding of international security. These principles still represent the benchmark for the conduct of governments of the participating states.

The foundations on which we stand are sound. However, when considering the existing multilateral security mechanisms, one cannot but notice a certain performance deficit.

While our Organization must adapt better to the new challenges, it is also true that the participating states need to remain true to the agreed common principles and continue implementing their commitments. This is the best way of ensuring that the OSCE will remain the main forum for security dialogue in Euro-Atlantic area, as it has been for more than three decades.

Our security environment has changed dramatically and we now face a host of global challenges, such as poverty and climate change, migration, pandemics as well as terrorism and various forms of organised crime. Most recently, the global economic and financial crisis put additional dimension to the issue of international security for which we all share global responsibilities as individual states as well as regional organization.

Military deterrence has long ceased to be the sole guarantor of safety and it is obvious that the various variables that ensure today's stability are inextricably intertwined. That is also why the three dimensions of the OSCE should remain as closely linked as possible in order to allow our Organization not only to face but also to find solutions to the new challenges.

In our opinion, the comprehensive concept of security is one of the most significant achievements in international relations since the end of the Second World War. We therefore insist that increased attention on "hard" security must never come at the expense of what is often and misleadingly referred to as "soft" security.

One of the examples dealing with “soft” security is regional cooperation on mine action. At the special conference in November in Dushanbe the OSCE and Slovenia presented a multi-phase project on the facilitation of regional cooperation in Mine Action in Central Asia. We are satisfied to see four of countries from the region joined this initiative.

Democracy is one of the most important foundations for real and lasting security. Democratic processes need continuous support, but also continuous monitoring and adapting.

In this regard, let me underline the special importance that my country attaches to the work of the OSCE's Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights. Its role in election observation is crucial and we encourage further development of cooperation with the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe.

The understanding that respect for the principles of democracy, human rights and the rule of law are an inseparable aspect of our collective security should guide us in all of our work. I would therefore like to commend the Greek Chairmanship for launching the Corfu Process. After all, despite its shortcomings the OSCE is the organization of choice for an open discussion about comprehensive security.

It remains the only regional security organization that brings together all the participating States on the basis of equality. We therefore believe that it is important to revitalise the existing mechanisms and structures in the way to make OSCE stronger. In this sense, the Final Report and Recommendations of the Panel of Eminent Persons on strengthening the effectiveness of the OSCE, which was prepared during the Slovenian OSCE Chairmanship in 2005, could be helpful.

In this connection, let me also recall the Istanbul Charter for European Security of 1999. In it the OSCE specifically undertook to strengthen relations with organizations that promote comprehensive security in our region. In the past six months I had a pleasure to keep advancing this goal in my role as the Chairman of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe. I am especially glad that both the OSCE and the Council of Europe paid close attention to the issue of migration management, which is a classic comprehensive security issue, with clear links not only to border security, but also to tolerance and non-discrimination.

Before concluding, let me say once again that we welcome a frank and open discussion on the existing multilateral mechanisms. There are obviously different views about their effectiveness and legitimacy. For our part, we never doubted the capacity of the OSCE to reform, revitalize and rebalance itself in order to face the new security challenges. However, we also believe that such an adaptation must be anchored in a strong set of common values.

We believe that these common values and principles could be reaffirmed, maybe even updated and set on a new course, on the basis of a thorough and high-level debate. Organizing an OSCE Summit in 2010 would provide us with the opportunity to do this and we welcome the readiness of Kazakhstan to host a summit. We should stop debating the *pros and cons* of holding a summit. Instead, we should direct all our endeavours into

filling the summit's agenda with the key issues of substance. A lot has changed since the Istanbul Summit and it is our common responsibility to respond to these changes.

Finally, I would like to thank our Greek hosts for their hospitality and commend them for a memorable Chairmanship. And, of course, I would also like to wish our friends from Kazakhstan Minister Saudabayev every success. You can count on our full support.

Thank you for your attention.