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**STATEMENT BY MR. XAVIER ESPOT, MINISTER OF
FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND INSTITUTIONAL RELATIONS OF THE
PRINCIPALITY OF ANDORRA, AT THE SEVENTEENTH MEETING
OF THE OSCE MINISTERIAL COUNCIL**

Athens, 1 and 2 December 2009

Mr. Chairman,
Distinguished heads of delegations,
Ladies and gentlemen,

I should also like to congratulate and thank Mr. Papandreou for his indefatigable work and leadership, and all of his team for their efforts this year to advance and promote dialogue as an instrument for re-establishing confidence between the States present here today. I should also like to express my thanks for the organization and warm welcome in Athens.

The inclusiveness of the OSCE and its comprehensive, indivisible and co-operative concept of security make it ideally suited to confront the threats and challenges of the twenty-first century. For the OSCE to effectively translate this concept into specific actions it needs to define priorities and focuses, which must be followed up and pursued in a coherent manner using far-reaching strategies. The work of the OSCE also has to be well co-ordinated with that of other international organizations, making good use of the Platform for Co-operative Security adopted in Istanbul.

In this regard, the Corfu Process is a useful means of defining priorities, reaffirming and nurturing our principles and shared commitments and improving the mechanisms and instruments for conflict prevention and crisis management so as to be able to ensure a rapid response to crisis situations. To date the process has demonstrated that dialogue is an effective instrument for achieving concrete results. There is a need to reconcile our principles and commitments so as to ensure that they can be applied in the interests of progress. The aim must be to revitalize the OSCE. We are open to the organization of an OSCE summit if there is a need to analyse any topic with a view to elaborating a concise strategy.

Mr. Chairman,

The rule of law, respect for human rights, fundamental freedoms and freedom of communication are the cornerstones for safeguarding peace, security and stability. We should not forget the importance of encouraging education as a basis for creating free and pluralistic societies and for combating intolerance. There is no doubt that education is an important instrument for preventing conflicts. Andorra has contributed this year to projects for promoting democratic culture and tolerance in schools in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

We support the initiative by Kazakhstan to organize a high-level follow-up meeting on tolerance, combating discrimination and promoting diversity. We hope that it will be possible to define specific activities and programmes aimed at increasing the involvement of civil society in this work.

There is a link between climate change and security. We believe that the OSCE should include climate change in its agenda, implement policies to reduce energy consumption and promote the use of renewable energies. The OSCE could elaborate good practice guidelines for reducing consumption and promoting renewable energies with a view to establishing policies to protect the environment.

We attach great importance to the legal status of international organizations. We believe that the draft convention that would give the OSCE a legal personality, privileges and immunities should be approved. This would prevent OSCE staff from working in a legal vacuum.

In conclusion, I should like once again to thank the Greek Chairmanship for its work, to express my best wishes to Kazakhstan for its forthcoming Chairmanship of the OSCE and to offer it our support and sincere co-operation for next year.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.