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HUNGARY

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OF THE REPUBLIC OF HUNGARY**

OSCE MINISTERIAL COUNCIL MEETING

(Madrid, 29 November 2007)

Mr. Chairman,

Let me first of all express my appreciation to the Government of Spain for its kind hospitality and the perfect organizational arrangements enabling us to have a thorough discussion here. I would also like to thank the Spanish Chairmanship-in-Office for its tireless efforts and the excellent work it has done in the political leadership of the OSCE during the whole year, sometimes under quite challenging circumstances.

As a member of the European Union, Hungary fully subscribes to the statement delivered by the distinguished Foreign Minister of Portugal on behalf of the Union. At the same time, allow me to share with you, in my national capacity, some thoughts on a few issues we attach particular importance to.

Despite all the difficulties of consensus-building, our organization has proved valuable in the fields of early warning, conflict prevention, crisis management and post-conflict rehabilitation, as well as in providing assistance to participating states with a view to building a genuine democratic society, promoting the rule of law and safeguarding human rights, including the rights of national minorities. Since the work on "Strengthening the Effectiveness of the OSCE" was successfully accomplished by our last ministerial meeting a year ago, we should now concentrate our efforts on best utilizing the potential offered by our strengthened organization.

Hungary has always considered OSCE field missions as one of the most efficient tools at our disposal. The missions' extensive presence in their host countries allows them to provide invaluable assistance to, and expertise for, stabilization, democratization and capacity building in accordance with their respective mandate. At the same time, we deem it important to continuously adapt our missions to the changing security environment and to the internal political, social and institutional developments of the host country, especially in times of scarce resources.

One of the biggest endeavors our organization has ever taken part in, is the OSCE-Mission in Kosovo (OMIK) established in order to support the efforts of the international community to bring peace and stability to this turbulent part of the Balkans. In our view, OMIK's mandate should be extended by one year, irrespective of Kosovo's future status since it possesses all necessary tools, experienced and highly skilled professional staff and a broad set of field offices to provide continuous, unbiased and impartial flow of information to other international missions. OMIK's substantial assistance to the authorities in Kosovo in organizing the elections on 17 November was yet another manifestation of the Mission's effectiveness.

We must also be responsive to positive developments in the Balkans, and should not shy away from drawing the appropriate conclusions from them. The OSCE Mission in Croatia has undoubtedly fulfilled the bulk of its mandate. Now Croatia is a country able to function on its own as a mature democracy where the solution of the still open issues is evidently on the right track. Therefore, we are of the view that the time has come for the OSCE to close the present chapter of its activities in Croatia, a genuine success story.

At the same time, we are convinced that adaptation to the constantly changing security environment also requires brave and responsible decisions to be taken regarding issues that have no precedent in the history of the OSCE. We believe that it is a vital interest of ours to contribute to security and stability in the southern part of Central Asia is a vital interest of ours. We can therefore lend our support to OSCE's engagement in fields of border security and border management with Afghanistan, our partner for co-operation.

Mr. Chairman,

Turning to the politico-military dimension, I cannot but reiterate Hungary's commitment to ensuring the long-term viability of the CFE Treaty, the cornerstone of Euro-Atlantic security. Together with our NATO Allies, we have made constructive efforts to address Russian concerns and to prevent the erosion of this conventional arms control regime. In this spirit we still hope that Russia will not suspend the implementation of the Treaty on the 12th December as envisaged earlier, since the suspension would make our task of reaching a compromise even more difficult. However, even in case of suspension, we expect Russia not to take any steps contrary to its Treaty obligations. In turn, we remain open to further innovative ideas and proposals in order to achieve the earliest possible entry into force of the Adapted Treaty. To arrive at such a breakthrough would be all the more important because it would also contribute to the solution of frozen conflicts in Moldova and the Caucasus.

In the human dimension of the OSCE we are, unfortunately, witnessing certain efforts by some participating states to put our common achievements into question, through attempts to rewrite the solemn declarations in which our Heads of State or Government have committed themselves to building democratic societies and guaranteeing all freedoms to our citizens. Since we still stand for the common values that united us at the time of the signing of the Charter of Paris we cannot accept efforts aimed at weakening the standards we have undertaken, and at questioning the autonomy of our institutions including ODIHR in the context of election observation. We urge all participating states to cooperate fully with ODIHR enabling it to fulfill its comprehensive mandate to conduct full-fledged observation before, during and after elections.

On a more positive note I would like to emphasize our satisfaction with the work done in the economic dimension. We applaud the efforts of the Spanish Chairmanship-in-Office to revive this dimension by proposing an OSCE strategy on environment security and by putting forward a draft decision on water management which contains the most important elements of a Hungarian proposal submitted earlier and aimed at fostering trans-boundary co-operation in this field.

Mr. Chairman,

Agreement on the organization's future chairmanships is essential for the seamless and undisturbed operation of the OSCE. We have therefore vigorously supported the efforts of the Chairman-in-Office to work out a package-deal, acceptable to all parties concerned in the "three countries for three years" formula covering the period between 2009 and 2011.

In conclusion, I would like to offer our full co-operation to the incoming Finnish chairmanship and wish our Finnish friends every success in their endeavors.