

OSCE Ministerial Council, 29-30 November, 2007, Madrid

Statement by H.E. Per Stig Møller

Minister for Foreign Affairs of Denmark

Mr Chairman,

First let me express my full support for the statement made by Portugal on behalf of the European Union.

Mr Chairman,

The gathering of the OSCE Ministerial Council once a year is a symbol of the strength and durability of the commitments we have undertaken together. The political will to implement our commitments is the glue that binds us together.

A free and fair election process and a vibrant civil society are and must be at the heart of our democracies, as it is at the heart of much of the work we undertake in the OSCE. Therefore, I wish to express my Government's appreciation of the significant and very valuable contribution of ODIHR in enhancing respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. The independence and impartiality of ODIHR must be protected. We greatly value the work ODIHR is doing in the crucial area of election observation. The common efforts of ODIHR and the Parliamentary Assembly are what constitute the watermark of OSCE's election observation activities. ODIHR should be invited in a timely manner to observe elections without conditions that effectively hinder the fulfilment, in letter and spirit, of the commitments undertaken in Copenhagen during the 1990 Ministerial Conference.

In this respect, Denmark fully supports the statement by the EU Presidency on the upcoming Russian Duma elections on 2 December 2007. Regrettably, conditions were not in place for ODIHR to accept the invitation by the Russian Federation to observe these elections.

An open and critical dialogue with civil society is the air that keeps democratic societies alive. Denmark is pleased that this principle always has been at the core of OSCE's work. Therefore, Denmark remains firmly committed to full NGO participation in OSCE events, which provide for an important venue for dialogue between OSCE participating States and civil society.

Mr Chairman,

Under Denmark's current Chairmanship of the Forum for Security Co-operation (FSC) this forum has again dealt with a number of topical issues, such as missile defence and the European security framework. Although these security issues primarily belong in the framework of NATO, the FSC discussion has hopefully contributed to enhancing transparency and confidence-building efforts. Furthermore, we welcome the FSC intensified dialogue on general confidence- and security-building measures.

We also highly appreciate the valuable contribution, which the OSCE can provide in the fight against terrorism. We actively support relevant OSCE activities in order to prevent and combat terrorism and continue to be reminded of our obligation to ensure that all measures to counter terrorism are undertaken in accordance with our obligations under international law.

In our opinion, the CFE Treaty continues to be a source of stability and security on the European continent. We stress the importance of the obligations arising from the Treaty. Steps to unilaterally suspend the Treaty are therefore a source of concern. We call on Russia to refrain from any action, which may compromise the existing regime. The early entry into force of the Adapted CFE Treaty is our common goal. We call on all States Parties to engage constructively in this process with a view to preserving the CFE-regime. It's very positive, that Russia this month fulfilled the terms of the 2005 bilateral agreement with Georgia on withdrawal of Russian troops from Georgia one year ahead of schedule.

Mr Chairman, let me now turn to some regional issues.

The OSCE Mission in Kosovo is playing an important role in support of a peaceful, democratic and multi-ethnic Kosovo. Special attention should be paid to protection of ethnic minorities, security and public safety, as well as the protection of religious and cultural heritage. We strongly feel that the important OSCE role on the ground in Kosovo should not be jeopardized by the status process.

The unresolved territorial conflicts in the South Caucasus remain a grave concern. The OSCE continues to play a constructive and important facilitating role in South Ossetia and Nagorno-Karabakh. However, political will and real engagement among all the parties concerned is key to finding solutions.

I would like to commend Spain for the remarkable work done in further promoting the cooperation with Partner countries during the 2007 chairmanship. Denmark warmly supports an OSCE engagement with Afghanistan – a country in which Denmark is already actively involved in building security and democracy.

The situation in Afghanistan has an impact on the whole region and Denmark welcomes any effort to ensure long-term stability as well as social and economic rehabilitation in Afghanistan. The OSCE can certainly contribute to securing border areas between Afghanistan and Central Asia.

Mr Chairman,

Denmark is very pleased to witness the strong interest from participating States to assume the chairmanship of the OSCE. We support the Kazakh candidacy to chair the OSCE and the efforts by the Spanish Chair to reach a so-called “package solution” for 2009-2011. The OSCE is an organisation where all participating states should be given the opportunity to lead and work for upholding the commitments and shared values throughout the OSCE region.

In closing, I would like to thank our Chairman-in-Office, Foreign Minister Miguel Ángel Moratinos, for all his excellent efforts over the past year in leading the OSCE. I would also like to assure the incoming Chairman, Foreign Minister Ilkka Kanerva, of our full support and cooperation in the year to come.

Thank you, Mr Chairman