

Statement
delivered by H. E. Professor Stefan Meller,
Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland
at the OSCE Ministerial Council Meeting
Ljubljana, 5-6 December, 2005

ENGLISH only

Mr Chairman,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Poland associates itself fully with the statement delivered by the distinguished representative of the United Kingdom on behalf of the European Union. Below we would like to offer some additional thoughts in our national capacity.

The 30th anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act has been an excellent opportunity to look back at the demanding process of adapting the Organisation to the changing security demands. Among the main achievements of this process, one has to mention the profound remodelling of the international relations – from distrust and rivalry-based into a co-operative framework pursuing common values. They have been so distinctively laid out in the “Charter of Paris” and subsequent OSCE documents, and introduced into daily practices of the Organisation.

We should not underestimate those achievements of the OSCE. They are particularly valid today, when we debate the future agenda for the Organisation. In our view, this process reaches beyond the question of institutional reform. We are in need of political will to ensure the assistance to the participating States undergoing political and economic transformation as well as an effective implementation of the OSCE commitments in the fields of security, economy, democratisation and human rights.

The OSCE is not about labelling some member States, but readiness to help. It touches upon the very core of the Organisation’s mission. Assistance in democratic transformation is one of the fields, where the OSCE has been continuously proving its utility. The Organisation remains, and will remain a tool for promoting the rule of law and civil society. Democratic governance is the basis for the grow-up of free societies and their stable functioning. Therefore, we are encouraged by the recent developments in Ukraine and Kirgistan, in which the OSCE has had its part.

In the case of Belarus we continue to note the lack of improvement in the situation of national minorities and the civil society in general.

Democracy by its very nature must be home-grown. However, we are convinced by our own experience that it can be strengthened when international

solidarity is with the victims of oppression. Solidarity demands courage. More and more often we hear unfounded accusations in which the OSCE's guidance aimed at promoting democracy is treated as attempts to interfere in order to "destabilise", or "gain influence". We believe that the OSCE's assistance and support for the civil society and free media minimises the risk of instability as a potential threat to security. The role of the OSCE's institutions, ODIHR included, and the field missions in fulfilling those tasks needs to be emphasised. Their autonomy and freedom for action must be preserved for the sake of their effectiveness, transparency and accountability. This is particularly important in the case of election monitoring, where independence of observation missions is crucial for credibility of their assessments.

Success in conflict prevention depends on effective targeting of the possible causes of a crisis. The cross-dimensional approach to security is the invaluable characteristic of the OSCE. The Organisation's efforts to address the challenges of terrorism, trafficking, migration and integration proves the validity of such an approach, which has been manifested in the leading topics raised by the succeeding Chairmanships. In this context we congratulate the Slovenian Chairmanship for advancing the OSCE agenda on those issues.

In our view, the achievement of the aforementioned goals could be facilitated by collaboration with other international organisations dealing with similar tasks. In this context we welcome the declaration of co-operation between the OSCE and the Council of Europe adopted earlier this year at the III Summit of the Council of Europe in Warsaw. This is just one of many achievements of this year's Slovenian Chairmanship for which we offer our congratulations

Poland is of the opinion that the OSCE reform cannot dominate its agenda. We should aim at reaching satisfying decisions as soon as possible and concentrate on challenges and activities this Organisation was designed for. Having done a lot of work and gone through many debates, the time has come to turn words into actions. We hope that the Belgian Chairmanship will be able to sum up the process of the reform during the next year's Ministerial Council in Brussels.

Thank you for your attention.