



Ministry for Foreign Affairs
Portugal

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**Intervention by
H.E. the Minister of State and for Foreign Affairs of Portugal
Mr. Luís Amado**

**16th OSCE Ministerial Meeting
4-5 December 2008
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Firstly, we would like to thank Finland for the excellent work it has carried out through its Chairmanship. These have surely been difficult times, but the high level of commitment and effort displayed by the Chairmanship have certainly made an impact and have strengthened the image of the OSCE. We are also grateful for the gracious hospitality extended to us here in Helsinki.

Mr. Chairman

This has been a particularly difficult year, a year in which Europe was faced with crisis and with conflict. Our Organization was able to respond and, under your outstanding leadership, it responded remarkably well.

In its quest to ensure a secure and stable future for all the OSCE participating States, a future in which all our societies can enjoy the same fundamental rights and political freedoms as well as the benefits of sound economic and social systems, our Organization continued to work in a cooperative manner towards the promotion of democracy, the rule of law and the respect for human rights throughout the OSCE area. Through its Institutions as well as its Missions on the ground, it has pursued with success its operational activities in the field, carrying out tasks ranging from election observation, preventive diplomacy and conflict prevention to post-conflict rehabilitation and promotion of dialogue and co-operation.

Mr. Chairman

Our shared objective is to prevent conflict and consolidate peace in the OSCE region, by eliminating the root causes of tensions, by the full respect of human rights, by building democratic institutions and by fostering economic and social progress. Much has been done but much remains to be achieved.

Peaceful settlement of regional conflicts is one of the key tasks of the OSCE. It is a field in which our Organization can take on special responsibilities.



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Whatever the genesis of the conflict in Georgia, which entailed violation of existing commitments both through an inappropriate use of force and through a disproportionate reaction, the OSCE was able to uphold its unity of purpose and of action and thus play an essential role in the international efforts that brought about the end of the hostilities.

The OSCE and its Mission to Georgia have since then also played an indispensable part in monitoring the implementation of the ceasefire agreement and we hope it will soon be allowed access to South Ossetia in conformity with its mandate. In addition, and in line with the fundamental commitment to contribute to the consolidation of security in Europe and to the peaceful settlement of disputes, the OSCE is also fully involved in the ongoing Geneva process which we hope will see the dawning of a peaceful and lasting settlement of the Georgian conflict, in accordance with shared commitments and principles and in full respect for the sovereignty and the territorial integrity of Georgia.

My country deplores the loss of lives on all sides of this conflict, and appeals to all concerned fully to respect the cease-fire agreement and prevent provocations that risk escalating a still tense situation, as well as to create the necessary conditions for the safe and unhindered return of internally displaced persons and refugees and the rehabilitation of the war-torn areas and regions.

The crisis in Georgia has demonstrated that violence and military action are never a solution and cannot be accepted or condoned. Looking at the current situation, we are forced to recognize that, in spite of our efforts, protracted conflicts in the OSCE area remain a source of concern. We believe that there is no alternative to dialogue and negotiation, in a spirit of transparency, mutual confidence and solidarity, and we therefore need, more than ever, to step up our cooperation and strengthen the OSCE's role as a primary instrument for conflict prevention, crisis management and post-conflict rehabilitation.

Mr. Chairman

In the political-military dimension, we have increased our efforts in the fields of arms control and confidence and security-building measures, small arms and light weapons, stockpiles of conventional ammunitions and the Code of Conduct on the Political-Military Aspects of Security. We strongly support the updating of its questionnaire, as a measure that contributes to the democratic control of the armed forces and to the fight against transnational threats of



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terrorism. We noted with satisfaction the comprehensive approach to enhancing the issue of Cyber Security within the OSCE region.

We also welcome the invitation by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Germany, Dr. Frank-Walter Steinmeir, for high-ranking experts from CFE countries to meet in Germany in order to facilitate a new beginning that might overcome the present crisis in the CFE regime.

Although not part of our work in the OSCE, I feel the need to take advantage of this opportunity to highlight the recent signing of the Oslo Convention on Cluster Munitions which, in our view, is in line with the humanitarian values of our Organization.

Mr. Chairman

This Ministerial Council meeting will again reaffirm our common determination to intensify the OSCE's contribution to the global fight against terrorism. It is essential to underline that observance of International Law, most particularly regarding respect for Human Rights, is not only compatible with combating terror but a condition for ultimate success in that endeavour.

There is no moral justification for terrorism. Addressing such a complex phenomenon requires that proper attention be given to all factors conducive to its rise and spread, including all forms of discrimination, political and economic exclusion, absence of good governance and the permanence of unresolved conflicts, to name just a few. The OSCE's added value in the fight against terrorism resides, to a great extent, in its multi-dimensional approach in promoting cooperation.

The OSCE has correctly recognized the importance of border security and management in fighting terrorism and organized crime activities. We are confident that our Ministerial Meeting will mark yet another step forward in the development of cooperation in this regard.

We must ensure that the OSCE's Border Security and Management Concept continues to be implemented with the committed support of the relevant Structures and Institutions, Field Missions and participating States, but also in close cooperation with other international actors that are present in the field, in such a way as to promote a coordinated approach by the International Community.



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Mr. Chairman

Our world is also faced with a deep financial crisis, the implications of which are yet to be fully grasped. As with our security, our economic systems are interlinked and indivisible.

There is therefore a need to devote increased attention to the OSCE's Economic and Environmental Dimension, to cooperate more closely with other relevant international organizations and to deepen regional and interregional cooperation in this sphere.

We must also find ways further to explore this Dimension's potential in the many and diverse fields it covers, ranging from business and investment promotion and Small and Medium Enterprises' development to cooperation in transport, energy and environmental security, as well as climate change, which is increasingly regarded as a major environmental challenge with serious security implications, and the fostering of effective and comprehensive migration policies in countries of origin and destination. In this regard, let me particularly welcome the incoming Greek Chairmanship's intention to devote the 17th OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum to the theme "Migration management and its linkages with economic, social and environmental policies to the benefit of stability and security in the OSCE region".

We share the view that the key contribution of the OSCE in this Second Dimension lies in facilitating dialogue aimed at promoting good governance, economic growth, sustainable development and environmental protection, which are key to combating threats and challenges to security and stability in the OSCE region. And we are convinced that we must now take a more strategic approach to the economic and environmental aspects of security, and therefore to prioritize the numerous activities and targets dealt with in this Dimension with a strong focus on the added value to the OSCE's comprehensive security concept and the viability of practical results.

Mr. Chairman

This year we celebrate the 60th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Here in Helsinki, birthplace of our Final Act, we, the OSCE



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participating States, must reaffirm our strong commitment to the Human Dimension of the OSCE which has unquestionably contributed to the implementation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

The respect for human rights, fundamental freedoms, democracy and rule of law is a common endeavour shared by all the 56 participating States. The responsibility to implement these OSCE fundamental commitments remains an issue of direct and legitimate concern to all of us and does not belong exclusively to the internal affairs of a given participating State.

Mr. Chairman,

Under your able and determined Chairmanship, Portugal is pleased to look back on 2008 as a year where the Human Dimension was at the core of the OSCE. In particular, my country welcomes the attention that you devoted to issues as important and far-reaching as the Roma and Sinti Action Plan, the fight against Trafficking in Human Beings and Election Observation.

Election Observation is a key element to assisting all the participating States in upholding their democratic commitments. In this respect, allow me, Mr. Chairman, to reiterate our full support to the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights and to the election methodology that it has developed over the last decade. Portugal also greatly values the role of the OSCE's Parliamentary Assembly in election observation. We therefore remain convinced that both the PA and the ODIHR, in true partnership and on the basis of the 1997 Cooperation Agreement and the Ministerial Decision 19/06, will remain the two essential pillars of the OSCE's election observation activities.

Mr. Chairman,

Portugal is a strong supporter of the Alliance of Civilizations initiative. As stated by our Secretary General in 2006, "the OSCE is itself already an alliance of civilizations in action". We therefore remain convinced that the OSCE is in a position to provide a substantive contribution to the aims and goals of the Alliance of Civilizations initiative. We are confident that the incoming Greek Chairmanship will continue to give the necessary political impetus to the OSCE's contribution to the Alliance of Civilizations.



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Mr. Chairman

The OSCE's ability to reach out and develop cooperation with Partners in Asia and the Mediterranean is key to its effectiveness and relevance in today's fast evolving security environment, characterized by global and asymmetric threats that seriously challenge every member of the International Community.

We believe that the OSCE and its Partners for Cooperation have chosen the right approach by agreeing on a broad, multi-dimensional perspective in cooperating to fight terrorism, trafficking in human beings, narcotics and Weapons of Mass Destruction, duly taking into account relevant political, economical, environmental and Human Rights considerations.

Today, as in the past, the Mediterranean Basin represents a fundamental link – not a barrier – between peoples and cultures whose deep rooted interactions must be met by a similar level of dialogue and cooperation. Within its scope, the OSCE's efforts already represent a significant contribution and there is a broad potential to further develop this relationship. Tolerance, mutual knowledge and mutual respect – three objectives that tend to reinforce each other – must remain central to our efforts as we engage in exchanging experiences and lessons learned.

Mr. Chairman

Portugal would also like to reiterate its full support to the early adoption of the “Convention on the international legal personality, legal capacity and privileges and immunities of the OSCE”, which would, in our view, enhance the Organization's ability to perform its tasks fully.

Let me conclude, Mr. Chairman, by reiterating our great appreciation for the determined efforts of the Finnish Chairman-in-Office and his team to make a success of this Helsinki Ministerial Council and by wishing the very best to the incoming Greek Chairmanship, with whom we look forward to working towards a better and more peaceful world.