

**Address by H. E. Grażyna Bernatowicz
Undersecretary of State
at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland
XVII OSCE Ministerial Council
(Athens, 1st December 2009)**

Mister Chairman,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

This year we celebrated the 20th anniversary of the beginning of the transformation process of Europe. These historic events, which started with the Round Table and the first democratic elections in Poland in June 1989, were also made possible thanks to the Helsinki Process. The Helsinki Final Act made a major contribution to the fall of the communist regimes of Central and Eastern Europe.

At that time of historic change some argued that the end of the Cold War and the collapse of a bipolar system deprived the OSCE of its *raison d'être*. The sceptics have been proven wrong. One should not underestimate the significant impact that the Organisation has had on the transformation of Europe since 1989.

Our annual gatherings remind us to reflect upon whether we are sufficiently harnessing the Organisation's potential. We should admit that there is room for improvement, and the discussion that has taken place in the last couple of months within the framework of the Corfu Process is the best illustration of this. Poland believes that the OSCE needs to continue playing a leading role as a forum for dialogue and co-operation among states.

Mister Chairman,

The political-military aspects of security in the OSCE deserves our continues attention. We need to stress that the current situation in relation to the CFE Treaty continues to be a matter of concern. It is not only the regular processes of information exchange and verification at stake, but also a system of security co-operation and a co-operative culture of military relations that has worked for many years. We hope that we will soon be able to renew the dialogue amongst the parties to the Treaty.

Poland appreciates the importance of the OSCE's economic and environmental dimension. There are areas where the Organisation could strengthen its input. Energy security has emerged as a key issue for stability and sustainable economic development in the OSCE region. The Organisation should play a greater role in assisting participating States in the protection of critical energy infrastructure. It can serve as a unique platform for dialogue, information sharing and the exchange of good practices, as well as developing early warning mechanisms to combat potential energy crises.

Democracy and human rights constitute a key element of security in Europe. All of the OSCE's participating States should reaffirm their commitments to these principles and their full implementation. The OSCE's expertise, together with its network of institutions, has continuously demonstrated its utility in this regard. This has made the Organisation a point of reference for numerous international and domestic state and non-state actors.

Mister Chairman,

The strategic discussion conducted within the framework of the Corfu process has proven the need to continue the European Security Dialogue as an instrument to increase confidence and trust in the OSCE area. We have reached the stage where our deliberations should be more concrete and structured. The dialogue that was conducted in Vienna shows that we have chosen the right direction. We should focus on enhancing European security, as well as the OSCE's role as an important forum for consultation in this field. There are some areas that deserve special attention - primarily our existing commitments and mechanisms in the field of conflict prevention and crisis management, protracted conflicts, arms control, human rights mechanisms and new threats to security.

Mister Chairman,

We should not prejudge the results of the Corfu Process. The simplest strategy tends to be the best. Our primary focus should be on how to make use of the existing European security mechanisms that have already proven their efficiency. The European Security Dialogue should be aimed not at replacing them but rather at

improving the way that they function. We also believe that it is as of yet too early to talk about a final document that could be adopted on the basis of the results of the Corfu discussions. As to the recent Russian draft of the European Security Treaty, let me in a very preliminary fashion mention two aspects. First, this draft needs to be carefully analyzed against the background of existing security mechanisms and institutions. Second, the Corfu process is the proper framework for discussing new ideas relating to European security.

As far as a high level meeting is concerned, we are open to consider such meeting in 2010 if it is justified by progress of the strategic dialogue.

Mr. Chairman,

I would like to join all the others in thanking Greece for its strong and effective Chairmanship of the OSCE in 2009, in particular for promoting the dialogue on the future of European security. We commend and congratulate Greece for its leadership. May I wish all the best to the incoming Chairman-in-Office, Kazakhstan. We welcome your Chairmanship and we are convinced that you will be able to help develop the Corfu process further.

Thank you for your attention.