

**ADDRESS BY H.E. ALİ BABACAN,
MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF TURKEY**

**The Fifteenth Meeting of the OSCE Ministerial Council
29 -30 November 2007, Madrid**

Mr. Chairman,

It is a pleasure to be in Madrid for the OSCE Ministerial Council. I should like to join other colleagues who spoke before me in thanking the Government of Spain for hosting us all so graciously and in the best traditions of this country.

As a vital pillar of the Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian security structures, the OSCE's importance and core functions remain undiminished and if anything have been augmented. This is thanks to the Organization's ability to adapt itself to changing circumstances and to reforming itself where and when necessary. Indeed, the Spanish Chairmanship of this Organization, among its many worthy achievements, has shown leadership in consolidating several important steps we have taken in the past to increase the effectiveness of the Organization.

The community of shared values and interests that this Organization stands for is more than a common denominator which we, the participating States, have created over several decades. It serves, in this transcontinental forum for political dialogue, to define cooperative measures designed ultimately to better the lives of our citizens, through contributing to security and stability in this broad geography.

The sense of solidarity and drive for cooperative action initiated by the Helsinki Final Act continues to guide us through challenging times and crossroads. Ministerial Council meetings as this one, are occasions for us to collectively pronounce our reaffirmation of those values and principles which the OSCE stands for and to rededicate ourselves to their sustained implementation. Let me hasten to do so on behalf of my Government.

Mr. Chairman,

At the core of our collective efforts towards security and stability lies the protection and promotion of human rights and fundamental freedoms. We acknowledge that gaps exist between commitments and the state of their implementation throughout the OSCE area. In Turkey, despite challenges on the security front, we have succeeded in achieving a steady progress in strengthening democracy and the rule of law through a sustained process of reforms. We are resolved to continue on this path, which not only meets the aspirations of the Turkish people, but also corresponds with our international commitments, including those we have undertaken at the OSCE.

Despite all efforts for the promotion and protection of human rights, acts related to racism, xenophobia, Islamophobia and discrimination occur in many societies. These acts constitute not only a violation of the basic human rights of those targeted individuals, but also a serious threat to the security as well as the democratic nature of our societies.

Tolerance, non-discrimination and avoidance of all types of prejudices should be the common attributes of our societies. Their attainment must be vigorously pursued as a prerequisite for the enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms by all. In view of an alarming increase in the number of hate crimes and incidents throughout the OSCE area, we need to preserve an unwavering will to address these challenges and where necessary, reinforce our resolve to do so in solidarity. As political leaders, we must speak out against those targeting vulnerable communities and support those who build bridges across cultures and religions.

In this regard, combating discrimination and intolerance against migrants and Muslims in some countries, and intensifying efforts for their integration into the societies where they live require particular attention in line with the ongoing efforts to counter rising racism and xenophobia within the OSCE area.

The important role played by the three Personal Representatives of the Chairman-in-Office in this field is an asset for the Organization and the record of their achievements is the best justification for the extension of that mechanism, as well as their tenure.

In an increasingly globalized world, local and national responses to hate should be complemented by global action based on respect and cross-cultural cooperation. An increased cooperation and partnership between the OSCE and the Alliance of Civilizations initiative of the United Nations, which my Government prides itself for having co-sponsored together with Spain, provides an opportunity for the OSCE to make further substantial contribution to the advancement of global peace and security.

Combating terrorism is a constant priority. Tens of thousands of Turkish citizens lost their lives as a result of acts of terror. In the memory of the sufferance inflicted in this city of Madrid, I take the opportunity to reiterate my sympathy for all victims of terrorism. We must fight this scourge in all its forms and manifestations. We must strongly demonstrate our resolve to defeat it. The Ministerial statement on the support to the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy is a further testimony to our readiness and willingness to take the necessary steps to this end. Turkey will continue to support the OSCE's activities aimed at combating terrorism as part of the worldwide efforts and rightfully expects that its own legitimate fight will enjoy full and active collaboration by its partners.

Mr. Chairman,

Protracted conflicts in Nagorno-Karabakh as well as in South-Ossetia, Abkhazia and Transnistria continue to undermine our collective security and stability and impede cooperation in a variety of fields. The instruments and mechanisms at hand, which closely involve the OSCE, though appearing to have contained these conflicts, regrettably have not resulted in finding lasting solutions. We must continue to address them with a renewed focus and commitment. The parties to this conflict on the other hand must be aware that time is not in the service of any of them. Full respect for the sovereignty, territorial integrity and

inviolability of internationally recognized borders of the states concerned should remain at the foundation of our efforts.

In this decisive stage in the process, we look forward to a final settlement of the status of Kosovo. We wish to see a fair and sustainable solution that would meet the interests and concerns of all parties involved, as well as those of the international community. We are concerned that a delay in bringing this matter to a sustainable closure, might lead to instability in the region and possibly beyond.

Turkey has always advocated and supported a process for progressively closer relationship with the OSCE's Partners for Cooperation. We commend Spain for its efforts to further engage the Partners in our work on the basis of OSCE norms, principles and commitments. Developments in these countries have a direct impact on the OSCE region and vice versa. In this respect, the participating States need to be conscious of the plight of the people of Afghanistan and that this country is the front line in our global campaign to defeat terrorism. We must demonstrate this awareness, as my country does, by contributing through political, military and economic means to bolster efforts, which Afghanistan deploys on a national basis. Turkey has, right now, 27 schools furnished where 37 thousand students attend. We have healthcare centers where everyday almost 1000 patients are treated. We have recently increased our military presence by 50% to 1220. We look forward to and support any viable role the OSCE takes in this broad and challenging endeavour.

Mr. Chairman,

The OSCE, since the outset, has served as an invaluable forum for devising arms control and confidence and security building instruments and mechanisms. The reinforced security dialogue in the OSCE attests to its continued relevance and added value. The Organization's capacity and acquis in this field should continue to be utilized in addressing the challenges that we face. The CFE Treaty together with its flank regime is a key part of that acquis, as the cornerstone of Euro-Atlantic security. We call on all States Parties to the Treaty to refrain from undermining its validity and work cooperatively towards its consolidation through bringing into force its adapted version without closing the door to a subsequent review of its operation as appropriate.

This meeting is the high point of the Spanish Chairmanship where stocktaking of our endeavours will be in order. I very much hope Mr. Chairman that the Council will, as a crowning achievement of your Chairmanship and much deserved addition to our list of successes, approve the Convention on the International Legal Personality, Legal Capacity, and Privileges and Immunities of the OSCE.

Finally, I should like to congratulate and thank Spanish Chairmanship and Spanish team for the dedication, engagement and perseverance in the exercise of your leadership role. We also look forward to cooperating closely with your successor, our Finnish colleague, in 2008. I would assure him of Turkey's constructive cooperation with and support to Finland's Chairmanship during their term in office.

Thank you.