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ADDRESS

by H.E. Mihai-Răzvan UNGUREANU,

Minister of Foreign Affairs of Romania

on the occasion of the 13th OSCE Ministerial Council

Ljubljana, 5-6 December 2005

**Mr. Chairman-in-Office,
Distinguished colleagues,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

At the outset allow me to express my satisfaction for meeting all of you again in the hospitable city of Ljubljana and to thank our hosts for the excellent preparations they have made for a successful outcome of the OSCE Ministerial Council.

I commend you, dear Minister Rupel and your team, for the inspiration and dedicated leadership provided to our organization and I hope that the outcome of our meeting will give us all the well deserved satisfaction for your efforts.

My delegation fully associates itself with the statement delivered by the British Presidency of the European Union. In addition, I would like to share with you some aspects of high importance for my country.

Mr. Chairman,

The OSCE has managed to adjust to the challenges it has faced in its history, while continuously focussing on preventive diplomacy, crisis management and post-conflict rehabilitation. Its basic priorities have remained valid over the years: to help in consolidating and building democratic civil societies based on the rule of law, to prevent local conflict, to restore stability and peace and to overcome real and perceived security deficits.

Nonetheless, security is now a much broader concept than it used to be, only a couple of years ago. We are now in the process of seeking new ways to increase the relevance of our organization in this changing international environment, marked by increasingly cross and multi dimensional threats to our common values.

I believe that the discussions unfolded this year on the reform of the OSCE represent a step in the right direction. I welcome the Report of the Pannel of Emminent Persons as a valuable contribution to this process and support the idea of further engaging in the implementation of its consensus recommendations during the next year.

Romania has been actively involved in the substantial discussions triggered by the report, aiming at rendering our organization more effective and sustainable. I have asked our ambassador in Vienna to use his personal knowledge and experience to

facilitate consensus on concrete decisions for our meeting today. I still hope that he could be successful.

Romania will continue to be constructively engaged in the reform process and I am hopeful that the outcome of our common effort will be an organization better equipped to fulfill mostly difficult tasks, such as contributing to find viable solutions to frozen conflicts and the fight against international terrorism.

Mr. Chairman,

The persistent unresolved conflicts in our region, all of them very close to the Romanian borders, must remain our primary concern for the upcoming period. Their persistence has a strong impact on the credibility of the OSCE. This year we have witnessed some encouraging initiatives that facilitated the negotiation process. Nonetheless, we have to admit that little substantial progress has been made in the settlement of these conflicts and the continuation of this *status quo* is no longer acceptable.

The Transnistrian enclave remains a perilous black hole perpetuating vast criminal activities, spilling - over in the Black Sea region and Europe as a whole. I am confident that the EU border monitoring mission that has just started its activity will be instrumental in enhancing the transparency and trust among the parties involved. Romania supported the enlargement of the negotiation format, to include the European Union and the United States, and I believe that this strengthened framework will provide with impetus the settlement process.

I have been following very closely the discussions regarding the preparations for holding democratic elections in Transnistria. I do feel the need to underline again that our main objective should not be solely the elections, but the implementation of democratic standards in this region, as an integral part of the Republic of Moldova. We should all support the continuous democratic development of the Republic of Moldova, based on rule of law, respect of human rights, good governance and solid institutions. In this respect, Romania stands ready to offer its contribution to this process, based on our experience and knowledge of the realities in this region.

Romania follows with particular interest the developments in Georgia, especially in the regions affected by frozen conflicts. The last acts of violence in Abkhazia and the lack of progress in negotiations indicate that the international community needs to have a more substantial contribution to solving these issues. May I share the belief that new formats of dialogue and negotiation, in addition to the existing ones, could invigorate the process of confidence building between the parties, at various levels, as well as to help the advancement of democratic processes in the conflict areas, to the benefit of Georgian state, as a whole.

In close connection with the problem of yet unresolved conflicts, I would like to reaffirm Romania's stance with respect to the full implementation of the OSCE Istanbul commitments. This remains indispensable for making progress in solving the problem of Transnistrian, Abkhazian and Ossetian conflicts. Further delays are detrimental to the security interests of all participant states and affect the efficiency, the image and the viability of the OSCE.

Mr. Chairman,

The comprehensive approach to security remains one of the most important assets of our Organisation. Besides the political aspects, our common security requires continued efforts in implementing our commitments in the economic and human dimensions. Sustainable economic and social development continue to be relevant and needed.

The pursue of a real democratic society is a long-standing process and we need to continue our work to sustain and strenghten democracy in the OSCE area. Romania highly acknowledges the valuable work of the High Commissioner of National Minorities, the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights and the OSCE Representative for Free Media, whose work and commitment throughout the years have made a difference in the life of our organization and in our own countries. We will continue to uphold their activity.

Dear colleagues,

I will not conclude before referring to some of the very important achievements of the Slovenian Chairmanship in Office.

First of all, I would like to commend the increased attention and involvement of our Organization in dealing with tolerance and non-discrimination issues. Recent events in Europe prove the still existing gap between what we commit our countries to and what we witness on the ground. As a proof of our desire to support further progress in this field, Romania offers to host in 2007 a new high-level Conference on combating anti-semitism and other forms of intolerance.

Secondly, I praise the Slovenian Chairmanship for bringing to the agenda of our Organization the issue of migration, a theme with increasing relevance for all of us. The debates on this topic confirmed its cross-dimensionality and the fact that the OSCE can make a difference through its comprehensive approach to security. The decision we are going to adopt on this issue reflects partially the potential of our Organization in this area and we remain convinced that in the near future we will do more.

Thirdly, we commend the efforts of the Slovenian Chairmanship to increase the recognition of our organization as a reliable partner in its area of competence for other international organizations. We can praise ourselves with some important achievements in this field: the adoption of the first UN Security Council resolution on the cooperation between the UN and regional organizations as defined under Chapter VII of the UN Charter, the first high-level Joint Declaration of OSCE and Council of Europe, the first joint meeting of the OSCE and Council of Europe decision making bodies.

Enhancing the efficiency and coherence of the European institutional architecture is among the priorities of the Romanian Chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe that started only two weeks ago. Our goal is to promote the cohesion and the synergy between the main European organizations – the European Union, the OSCE and the Council of Europe - in order to ensure an efficient complementarity of developed activities, while avoiding unnecessary duplications.

As current Chair of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, Romania is committed to further the coordination and cooperation with the OSCE, in order to multiply their potential and resources to uphold human rights, democratic institutions and rule of law. We have already identified a series of joint projects with the incoming Belgian OSCE Chairmanship and we are looking forward to implementing them. The high-level meeting, scheduled for the end of January, will be an excellent opportunity to further discuss the important issues on the agenda of the two organizations so as to ensure coherent and joint responses.

Mr Chairman,

Dear Colleagues,

We shared with you the main reasons of satisfaction and yet unfulfilled expectations of our delegation in relation with OSCE work in 2005. In doing so we were guided by our confidence in and support for our Organization, its values and principles. We were also guided by our conviction that the Organization continues to remain relevant for our States and our citizens. Peace, security, democracy, respect of human rights and freedom - basic goals of our organization in the last three decades - will remain, in our view, crucial in the next decades of our cooperation. As responsible member of the Euro-atlantic community, we praise these goals and we'll do our best to promote them in the OSCE region.

Acknowledgements

Before concluding, I would like to wish every success to the incoming Belgian OSCE Chairmanship in 2006 and to reiterate my readiness to strengthen our cooperation, including in my capacity of Chair of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe.

Thank you for your attention.