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**Bulgarian Chairmanship****539th PLENARY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL**

1. Date: Thursday, 30 December 2004

Opened: 10.30 a.m.

Closed: 11 a.m.

2. Chairperson: Mr. I. Petrov

Prior to taking up the agenda, the Chairperson, on behalf of the Permanent Council, expressed condolences to Thailand (Partner for Co-operation) and to the participating States which had lost citizens in the tsunami in the Indian Ocean on 26 December 2004. The Council then observed a minute of silence.

The Chairperson announced that the period of silence regarding the decision on the extension of the mandate of the OSCE Office in Minsk had not been broken (see PC.DEC/655, the text of which is appended to this journal). Belarus made an interpretative statement (see attachment to the decision).

The Russian Federation raised a point of order concerning the provision of interpretation at and the format of that meeting of the Permanent Council. The Chairperson provided clarifications on those issues. Belarus and France supported the statement of the Russian Federation regarding interpretation.

3. Subjects discussed — Statements — Decisions:

Agenda item 1: **DECISION ON THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN AUDIT COMMITTEE**

Chairperson

**Decision:** The Permanent Council adopted Decision No. 656 (PC.DEC/656), the text of which is appended to this Journal, on the establishment of an Audit Committee.

Agenda item 2: ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- (a) *Situation regarding the 2005 Unified Budget and the Scales of Contribution: Slovenia*
- (b) *Farewell to the Bulgarian Chairmanship: United States of America (Annex), Netherlands-European Union, Russian Federation, Chairperson*
- (c) *Appointment of the Head of the OSCE Centre in Ashgabad: Turkmenistan*

4. Next meeting:

Thursday, 13 January 2005, at 10 a.m., in the Neuer Saal



**Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe  
Permanent Council**

PC.JOUR/539  
30 December 2004  
Annex

Original: ENGLISH

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**539th Plenary Meeting**

PC Journal No. 539, Agenda item 2(b)

**STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF THE  
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA**

As the Bulgarian chairmanship draws to a close, my delegation would like to thank the Bulgarian Chair, Minister Passy, and the Chairman of the Permanent Council, Ambassador Petrov and his entire staff for their leadership and excellent work as Chairman-in-Office, which was achieved at the cost of great sacrifice to their families and personal lives.

I would like to particularly note the outstanding, thoughtful and trustworthy work done by Ambassador Petrov, and praise the fruit of that work in the form of the confidence and trust that he engendered among all 55 participating States. Ambassador Petrov's performance was characterized by excellence in the hard work of diplomacy, a deep knowledge of each and every one of the myriad and difficult issues that we had to deal with this past year, and of an unflinching commitment to getting the job done. That combination qualifies him to join the ranks of those who make a difference in this world, those who, in a fair, balanced and thoughtful way, advance the cause of the human condition. Ambassador Petrov did so by enabling this Organization to function day-by-day as effectively as was at all possible.

The work of the Bulgarian Chair enabled the Organization to play its appropriate role as one of the pillars of the Euro-Atlantic relationship and facilitated the participating States' pursuit of the goals that we share, the goals that President Bush describes as a Europe whole, free and at peace — a true transatlantic community based upon shared values.

It is only right that a year which has seen its share of challenges, but also, I should note, its encouraging share of successes, should be ended by applauding the hard and selfless work of Minister Passy, Ambassador Petrov and the entire Bulgarian team. Thank you for all you have done!