

**Statement by H.E. the Minister of Foreign Affairs
of the Republic of Cyprus
Mr. Yiorgos Lillikas
at the 14th Meeting of the OSCE Ministerial Council,
Brussels, 4-5 December 2006**

Mr. Chairman, dear Colleagues,

Allow me first to join others in thanking the Belgian Chairmanship for the excellent preparation of all the aspects of this Ministerial, as well as, for the splendid hospitality extended to us in Brussels.

We know that your task has not been easy. Let me therefore congratulate you, for the dynamism and personal commitment you have shown in guiding our Organisation during your year in Office.

Mr. Chairman,
Cyprus fully aligns itself with the statement delivered by Finland on behalf of the European Union.

OSCE, through its comprehensive and cross-dimensional approach, continues to be a great asset in the European security policy architecture.

We all share the aspiration of strengthening OSCE where necessary, in order to enhance the flexibility and long-term effectiveness of its performance.

We equally welcome the ODIHR's (*Office of Democratic Institutions and Human Rights*) comprehensive Report.

Mr Chairman, dear Colleagues,

Cyprus will have the privilege to assume the Chair of the Forum for Security Cooperation for the first session of 2007. Assuming the FSC Chairmanship, in the aftermath of the Brussels Ministerial Council, entails the responsibility of giving impetus to the implementation of numerous decisions, as well as for implementing the yearly programme of work for 2007. In the priorities for 2007 Programme of Work we shall strive to preserve continuity and coherence in the action between our predecessors and future chairmanships.

The Forum will continue to be seized with a wide range of politico-military issues, including arms control and confidence and security-building measures. It will continue to tackle issues related to the new threats and to

examine changes in military doctrine arising out of them. Attention will, also be given, to policy issues such as border security management and civil-military preparedness.

The Forum will also continue to address these issues in a comprehensive way, within as well as outside the OSCE area, in close concert with our partners for cooperation and other international actors, thus reflecting the OSCE's concept of co-operative security.

We wish to underline, the significance of the Treaty on Open Skies for the promotion of greater openness and transparency in the military activities, and for the enhancement of security by means of confidence- and security-building measures. Therefore, we deeply regret that our application for accession is, after four years, still on the agenda of the Open Skies Consultative Commission, due to the objections, based on political grounds, of a an OSCE partner: Turkey.

This attitude certainly does not serve the aims, which we have jointly set. Other criteria and motives continue to prevent Cyprus from contributing effectively to this important, for the OSCE, area.

I hope the promotion of the OSCE interests will prevail and Cyprus will be able to join the Treaty of Open Skies.

Mr. Chairman,

Cyprus, as a Mediterranean country, acknowledges the special value of deepening the cooperation between OSCE and our Mediterranean Partners through a mutually enriching and beneficial dialogue.

Cyprus wishes to reiterate its commitment to the OSCE Mediterranean Partnership and express its readiness to contribute to its enhancement.

In closing, Mr. Chairman, I take this opportunity to wish the incoming Spanish Chairman-in-Office, and my friend Michael Moratinos, every success in tackling the challenging agenda of the OSCE in 2007 and assure him of our full support and cooperation for the year to come.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman