

ADDRESS
of H.E. Dr. Marat Tazhin, ENGLISH only
Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan,
at the OSCE Ministerial Meeting
(Madrid, November 29, 2007)

Dear Mr.Chairman,

Dear Colleagues,

Saluting everyone present I would like to express our sincere gratitude to the Spanish Chairmanship and personally to Minister Miguel Anjel Moratinos for the fruitful work and perfect arrangements of the present Ministerial Meeting in Madrid. Allow me also to salute the forthcoming Finnish Chairmanship and to wish Minister Ilkka Kanerva every success in conducting such a responsible mission.

We set grand-scale political modernization tasks. While implementing the program of democratic reforms the OSCE and its institutions' recommendations are duly taken into account.

On the 5th of November of this year, the ODIHR senior officials visited Astana, thus marking the beginning of the next stage of the "follow-up mechanism". The sides agreed to hold an initial plenary meeting of experts at the end of this year to set a specific course for joint activities for all of 2008. Thus, precisely in consultation with the ODIHR, a timetable for working on the reform of Kazakhstan's election legislation has been established.

In the context of future Chairmanship we are going to incorporate various proposals into a consolidated bill to amend the Media Law, which will reflect the OSCE recommendations as well. This will be the core of the work conducted on media legislation in 2008. The Government of Kazakhstan will take into consideration the ODIHR recommendations.

More than 8,000 media outlets are registered in the Republic of Kazakhstan. Over 80% of the media is privately owned.

The Government of Kazakhstan has always been attentive while addressing issues related to media activities. Thus, draft laws aimed at increasing legal responsibility for libel and vilification in the media, as well as on publishing activity have been recalled or suspended. In collaboration with the Office of the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, the issue of reduction of criminal liability for defamation in the media is being addressed.

Kazakhstan supports and will advance the idea of **developing media self-regulation mechanisms** that would take many existing issues off the agenda.

In 2008, **concrete measures will be taken to liberalize the registration procedures for media outlets.** The work towards this end is being conducted by the Government and the journalist community in concert with the OSCE representatives.

Kazakhstan continues its work on **implementation of the ODIHR recommendations in the area of elections and legislation concerning political parties** (follow-up mechanism).

It is planned that, on the basis of recommendations developed in the course of a broad discussion, the Central Election Commission of the Republic of Kazakhstan will prepare a package of recommendations, which will be considered by the Government in 2008; and the same year, a draft law, prepared on the basis of the said package of recommendations, will be sent to the Mazhilis of Parliament.

Thus, with the assistance of ODIHR and the OSCE's other institutions, we intend to take measures to reform the Law on Elections by the end of 2008.

Kazakhstan will take measures to liberalize registration requirements for political parties by the end of 2008.

In the framework of the conducted constitutional reform, local representative bodies' authority has been significantly expanded. Their place and role in the overall system of government had been redefined.

In the context of the Kazakhstan's future Chairmanship in the OSCE **state's efforts in refining the system of local self-government will continue.**

Kazakhstan has extensive experience in creating various nation-level dialogue platforms for examining the most acute domestic policy issues. For several years, various commissions functioned in the country, the last of which (the State Commission on Democratization, chaired by the Head of State) summarized these discussions and developed a package of constitutional reforms, which were passed by the country's Parliament this year.

On November 14, 2007, the Lower House of the Parliament - Mazhilis decided to form the Public Chamber. It represents a platform for public dialogue, enabling all interested sides to present their vision of the problems of

the state's economic and political development and to develop mechanisms for solving them.

Kazakhstan has taken measures on **further liberalization and greater openness and transparency of political-governmental processes**, as well as on creation of an effective model of cooperation between the government and civil society.

We consider the **human dimension** to be one of the most important directions of the OSCE activity. This is why Kazakhstan pays priority attention to the broad scope of activities within the framework of this "basket".

It is commonly recognized that one of the most important achievements of Kazakhstan in the humanitarian sphere is securing **the inter-ethnic and inter-religious accord**. Additional emphasis on strengthening the dialogue between religions and people is the imperative demand of our time.

Kazakhstan will support the extension of the mandates of three **Personal representatives of the Chairman-in-Office on religious tolerance and freedom of religions**. Our experience in promoting of these principles is exemplary. Kazakhstan has hosted two Congresses of the world and traditional religions, bringing together the spiritual leaders of main confessions, as well as the high level OSCE Conference on tolerance. Our country is a member of the group of friends of the 'Alliance of Civilizations'.

As an OSCE Chairman we shall stand for the compliance with the fundamental principles of open NGOs' participation in the OSCE events in accordance with the Helsinki document of 1992 and Budapest document of 1994. We stand for preservation of the mandate of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights.

By and large, we intend to make our contribution into ensuring the humanitarian security and to share our relevant experience which might be in demand throughout the entire area of responsibility of the OSCE.

Kazakhstan commits to preserve ODIHR and its existing mandate and will not support any future efforts to weaken them.

As a potential Chairman Kazakhstan commits to be a fair and objective leader, that will not be party to any proposals that are problematic for ODIHR and its mandate in future.

Dear colleagues,

The OSCE, which was once established as an instrument of détente, should remain to be a capable mechanism of implementation of international legal instruments to maintain **politico-military security**.

Being an active proponent of regional security, voluntarily abandoning the fourth largest nuclear arsenal, Kazakhstan will continue to pursue the policy of contributing to the stability in Central Asia and on the entire OSCE' space.

We support the initiatives aimed at strengthening the role of our Organization **in the process of post-conflict rehabilitation in Afghanistan**.

We share the view on the necessity to take urgent steps to implement the priority social and economic programs for Afghanistan. Extending our general support to the idea of strengthening the role of the OSCE in Afghanistan, which we consider to be valuable and timely, we expect the appropriate decisions to be adopted.

Kazakhstan is proud of its successful experience in promoting the economic reforms, settling the most difficult environmental problems of the former Semipalatinsk nuclear test site and the Aral Sea. We think it expedient for the Organization to considerably increase its activity on the **economic and environmental track**.

Mr. Chairman,

We have repeatedly underlined that we consider the issue of the support of Kazakhstan's bid to chair the OSCE in 2009 as an integral element of the Organization's reform and its political future. The declared equality and mutual respect of the OSCE Participating states should proliferate into all spheres of its activity.

We stand ready to reconfirm that Kazakhstan's aspiration to avail of the right to chair the OSCE is regarded as a logical follow up stage after 16 years of independent political and economic development of the country. This bid is an important element of our conceptual understanding of the secure world. Its origins can be traced back to the address made by President Nursultan Nazarbayev at the OSCE Lisbon Summit in 1996.

As we have stressed a number of times, **our Chairmanship in the Organization aspires to become a powerful catalyst of the reform process** and an additional confirmation of the rightly chosen path of further liberalization and openness. This initiative has facilitated the sustainability of the high tempo of transformations, readiness to conform to the highest

standards of organization and quality of life. We believe that **positive decision on our bid will have a multiplicative effect for the comprehensive modernization of our country and the region in its entirety.**

With dynamically developing economy at hand, a liberal vector is our principle and a conscious choice.

Kazakhstan is the collective candidate of the Commonwealth of Independent States. Moreover, our bid is endorsed by the absolute majority of the OSCE Participating states. Availing of this opportunity I would like to express our sincere gratitude to all countries which extended their support to our candidacy.

Kazakhstan's active position and its adherence to the OSCE values and increase of the efficiency of its bodies have prepared our country for the Chairmanship in the Organization and continuation of positive cooperation after completion of these functions. As an active participant of the OSCE, Kazakhstan recognizes the high responsibility for the future of our common Organization.

We hope that the OSCE would be able to adapt to the changed reality, retain its authority and weight on the world arena and become a renovated dialogue platform uniting Euro-Atlantic and Euro-Asian space. Kazakhstan stands ready to make its contribution to the execution of these goals in the capacity of the Chairman-in-Office of the OSCE and a member of Troika.

Thank you for your attention.