



PERMANENT MISSION OF THE HOLY SEE
TO THE ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY
AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE

**STATEMENT BY MONSIGNOR MICHAEL W. BANACH,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE HOLY SEE,
AT THE 777th MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

22 OCTOBER 2009

**RE: ADDRESS BY THE MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS
OF THE REPUBLIC OF LITHUANIA,
H.E. MR. VYGAUDAS UŠACKAS**

Madame Chairwoman:

1. The Holy See also joins previous Delegations in warmly welcoming H.E. Mr. Vygaudas Ušackas to the Permanent Council and would like to offer congratulations to his country which will assume the Chair of the OSCE in 2011.

2. For almost a half century, during which it suffered under a Marxist regime, like the other Baltic countries and many others, Lithuania was denied its national identity and political autonomy. As your country emerged from these difficult circumstances, it became a symbol which encourages the search for negotiated solutions to all conflicts, many of which are still burning on the European continent. In this regard, the Holy See has noted the participation of Lithuania in the Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS), as well as its active interest in the “Corfu Process” currently underway in the OSCE.

In the context we experience today, diplomacy is being led to take new forms, namely, the creation of opportunities for negotiation so that there will be less risk of conflict between cultural, ethnic or religious communities, as well as the fostering of closer cooperation between States so that human dignity will be better respected and peace affirmed. The Holy See acknowledges the

contribution of Lithuania to promoting mutual trust among peoples. Indeed, your country continues to witness to the fact that a nation and a continent cannot be built unless all the forces present in it are called to participate in serving the common good of all, in both the national and international community.

3. My Delegation has also noted the particular attention that Lithuania attaches to the human dimension. In fact, human rights lie at the origin of international life; the most fundamental of these is the right to life and to live in dignity, the right to freedom of conscience and religion, as well as the right to a family, the primary cell of society and the driving principle of international life. It is only on the condition that these freedoms are respected that the other aspects of international life can find their full sense. Without a human dimension, indeed, geopolitics, economic and financial exchanges and inter-cultural dialogue would be limited merely to the logic of special interests, which is never far removed from the logic of force.

Among the commitments in the OSCE human dimension is the right to religious freedom. This right takes its source not from a concession granted by the State but from the very dignity of the human person and his or her spiritual dimension open to goodness and truth. The Holy See defends the right to religious freedom, demands that it be universally respected, and views with concern discrimination against Christians and against the followers of other religions. My Delegation looks forward to working with the 2011 Lithuanian OSCE Chairmanship in promoting this and other agreed commitments in our Organization's "third basket."

4. In conclusion, I would like to assure Minister Ušackas that the Holy See both values its diplomatic links with his country, marked as it is by centuries of Christian witness, and that, in accordance with its own specific mission, will work together with Lithuania in promoting peace, mutual respect and the advancement of individuals and peoples.

Thank you, Madame Chairwoman.