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**38th JOINT MEETING OF
THE FORUM FOR SECURITY CO-OPERATION AND THE PERMANENT COUNCIL
18 February 2009
OPENING REMARKS BY AMBASSADOR MARA MARINAKI
CHAIRPERSON OF THE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

Your Excellency Minister Grushko,

It is my great pleasure, on behalf of the Greek Chairmanship, to welcome you in the Joint FSC-PC Meeting, in the Neuer Saal, where, a decade ago, you made, as representative of the Russian Federation, your personal contribution to the development of the OSCE as the main forum for shaping, deepening and enhancing European security and cooperation.

Over the past 34 years, the OSCE, more than any other European Security Organization, has reflected and, up to a certain degree, also shaped the trends and long-term perspectives of European security. Its unique ability to adapt to an ever-changing geopolitical environment, its consensus-building process, its comprehensive and inclusive composition, its geographical expansion from Vancouver to Vladivostok, have proven, time and again, that the OSCE is the forum where all of Europe's security actors can join forces in order to respond to the present challenges and shape the future perspectives of our common, indivisible, co-operative and cross-dimensional security.

One of the reasons of the success of "Helsinki", the first post World-War II Pan-European Security Agreement, was that it was based on the principle that security starts with the 'inherent dignity of the human person'. Security requires politico-military co-operation between States, the development of healthy economic and environmental governance, and the protection of basic human rights and fundamental freedoms. This cross-dimensional approach is as relevant today as it was in 1975. Therefore the best guarantee for a peaceful Europe should be not to replace the existing OSCE, but on the contrary to further enhance its role as one of the pillars of a European Security Architecture.

No one can credibly argue that, in 2009, we are faced by fewer challenges than a decade ago or even a couple of years ago. On the contrary, 2008 was a difficult and challenging year, which showed the OSCE's strengths and limitations. In particular, the crisis in Georgia shattered long-standing assumptions about security in the OSCE region, and laid bare the gravity of the challenges that remain for the whole OSCE

family to address, through the means available to us by the accumulated acquis of this Organization. We should always bear in mind that the foundation stone of the post-Cold War European Security Architecture remains the concept of co-operative security, in other words “Security with our neighbors and not from our neighbors”.

This concept: first, eliminates dividing lines, spheres of influence and zero-sum approaches, second, dictates the rules of fair play, inspires respect for the legitimate security concerns of other partners, and call for adherence to international law, openness and transparency, and, finally, leads to trust and cooperation.

Greece is convinced that there cannot be a lasting peace in the wider European region as long as we continue to view our relations through a zero-sum lens, which eventually leads to different strategic perspectives, mistrust, dividing lines and rivalries.

The real test of the state-of-play in terms of cooperative security takes place daily in this Organization. Every decision adopted testifies to the willingness of the participating States to put aside zero-sum approaches and work towards win-win solutions. It is a success of cooperative security, of the OSCE and of its participating States. Only last week, we all rejoiced by adopting a decision for the extension of the mandate of our military monitors in Georgia, allowing them to continue their valuable and commendable work and provide unbiased assessment of the situation on the ground.

This decision was a clear signal that all participating States appreciate the value of the OSCE’s continuing contribution to the efforts of the international community to provide stability in the region and alleviate the plight of the peoples affected by the conflict of last August. Similarly, every time that this Organization fails to reach consensus, is a trial and sometimes a failure of our cooperative security. And we have witnessed that this, unfortunately, nowadays has happened more frequently than it used to in the past.

Therefore, there is indeed a need to press the “reset button” in the re-evaluation of our relations among all 56 OSCE partners. We need to restore confidence and trust, to improve existing security structures, to pave ways in order to enhance cooperative security and establish means to achieve the maximum degree of implementation of existing commitments undertaken in the framework of cooperative and indivisible security.

Open-minded and bona fide dialogue remains the most basic and rudimental tool in our hands. We welcome this dialogue, which should be seen as a two-way street: everybody should be ready both to listen and to put forward his own concerns, ideas and proposals, without pre-empting the outcome of the dialogue.

The OSCE, with its broad membership, comprehensive approach to security and a valuable acquis of common principles and commitments is the appropriate forum for such a dialogue. The Greek Chairmanship has expressed its readiness to organize a High Level Meeting for the continuation of this dialogue that started in Helsinki, if and when this is agreeable by our OSCE partners.

However, it is clear that, at this stage, there are more questions than answers for all of us to explore together. Therefore, we believe that a bottom-up approach is useful in order to clarify some points, before submitting any concrete proposals for consideration at a higher political level.

With this in mind, we welcome you once again in the Joint FSC-PC meeting and we are looking forward to both listening to your presentation, as well as to a lively debate.

Mr. Minister, you have the floor.