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AFFAIRS OF THE GRAND DUCHY OF LUXEMBOURG, AT THE  
SEVENTEENTH MEETING OF THE OSCE MINISTERIAL COUNCIL**

Athens, 1 and 2 December 2009

Mr. Chairman,  
Secretary General,  
Colleagues,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

In this year of notable anniversaries of events connected with European security – I am thinking in particular of the fall of the Berlin Wall and the signing of the Charter of Paris for a New Europe 20 years ago, or the adoption of the Charter for European Security in Istanbul ten years ago – I am pleased to be in Athens today to help, I hope, to witness a new departure in the construction of security in Europe.

We are gathered here today in effect to knock down the last bricks in the wall of mistrust and to remove the last obstacles to co-operation and full enjoyment by all of the membership of a unified, stable and safe Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian space. Specifically, we need to agree without delay to give a new impetus to the political dialogue on European security by providing it with a clear structure, solid consistency and strategic direction, while at the same time firmly anchoring it within the framework of our Organization.

Mr. Chairman,

I should like to join previous speakers in thanking and congratulating the Greek Chairmanship for the outstanding work to this end that it has performed this year. I recall the highly constructive exchanges that we had in Corfu in June at the first informal meeting of the OSCE ministers for foreign affairs, which was an out-and-out success. I believe that these exchanges and the weekly meetings that our ambassadors have held subsequently in Vienna on this basis have made a veritable contribution to the creation of a new environment with an improved atmosphere and new tone. The continuation of this promising work should enable us to restore our Organization to a solid basis of trust, solidarity and collaboration. This foundation of trust has crumbled in the last few years – not least as a result of the conflict in Georgia in August 2008 and the degradation of the control and confidence regime established by the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE Treaty). The re-establishment of this foundation of trust will take time, but I am convinced that we are on the right path and

that, by persevering and agreeing now on a common agenda for dialogue after Athens, we shall manage to make Europe more stable and safe.

Thus, rather than risk getting bogged down attempting to settle complicated points of procedure that could be resolved at a later date on a pragmatic and ad hoc basis, I believe that we have gathered here to share a common vision that puts the security of Europe and of every individual at the centre of its concerns. It is in this spirit that I am hopeful that by tomorrow at the latest we will manage to adopt an important decision and declaration designed to further the Corfu Process.

Mr. Chairman,

Kazakhstan proposed with a great deal of enthusiasm to crown its Chairmanship in 2010 with an OSCE summit meeting.

I am hoping that before meeting for a summit, we will manage to achieve concrete results in the dialogue on the following four key domains that are of particular concern for me.

First, there is the strengthening of the effectiveness of conflict prevention and management.

Mr. Chairman,

The European security dialogue within the Corfu Process has demonstrated that the OSCE already has a wide range of mechanisms and instruments for conflict prevention and management. A good number of these instruments are outdated, however, and need to be adapted better to today's and tomorrow's threats and conflicts. I would be glad to support the proposal to give the Chairmanship or the Secretary General the authority to deploy an observation mission for a limited duration in an attempt to prevent a conflict from erupting, freezing or degenerating.

I join others in deploring the closure of the OSCE Mission to Georgia in June of this year when we are all agreed on the need for a greater OSCE presence in Georgia. It is extremely regrettable and certainly a wrong signal. In spite of this setback, the OSCE should continue to play a predominant role in the Geneva process and within the Incident Prevention and Response Mechanism and should have the benefit of a new basis in Georgia so as to be able to accomplish this task properly.

I also appeal to the parties to the conflicts in Nagorno-Karabakh and Transdnistria to redouble their efforts to find a peaceful solution to these conflicts.

The second domain that I believe to be essential is conventional arms control and confidence- and security-building measures.

The crisis surrounding the CFE Treaty, which is the cornerstone of European security, has been a serious warning that our achievements in the sphere of arms control are beginning to become eroded. We must redouble our efforts to find a way out of this impasse and seek the means to facilitate the rapid entry into force of the adapted CFE Treaty, working seriously on the basis of the proposed NATO plan for parallel actions and the memorandum submitted

by the Russian Federation. In the same spirit, my delegation supports the proposals for updating and adapting the Vienna Document 1999 to today's situation and challenges.

In the third place, we must attempt to work together to find a suitable response to the new threats that face us all.

Mr. Chairman,

At the beginning of the year, several countries in the OSCE region including mine had to deal with serious threats to their energy security because of the interruption, in the middle of winter, of gas supplies from the east of the European continent. The OSCE, whose participating States include the main energy producers, the main energy consumers and the main transit countries, must establish mechanisms for the prevention, early warning and resolution of energy crises like the one I have just mentioned so as to avoid a repeat of this type of incident. Luxembourg fully supports the inclusion of the issue of energy security in the future work on the Corfu Process. We also support the adoption here in Athens of a far-reaching ministerial decision on energy security.

During the last few years, our Organization has begun rightly to take greater account of threats to security posed by problems connected with the environment such as water management and climate change. In a few days the international community will be meeting at the highest level in Copenhagen to undertake new commitments in the fight against climate change, which will be vital to the survival of our planet. It would therefore be quite appropriate to strengthen the economic and environmental dimension of our Organization so as to take greater account of these new challenges, and I very much regret the fact that once again it will not be possible to reach agreement on a decision regarding the security implications of climate change.

Last but not least, it is not possible to seek to improve security without taking into account and strengthening the implementation of commitments in the human dimension.

Mr. Chairman,

The aim of guaranteeing peace and security through respect for the law cannot be achieved unless it is extended beyond States to individuals. We must therefore seek to enhance human rights and fundamental freedoms by promoting the rule of law everywhere. To do this we need strong institutions such as the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), whose strength lies in its independence, impartiality and professionalism, particularly with regard to election monitoring. Luxembourg was one of the 15 Member States of the European Union to have the European elections at the beginning of June evaluated by a group of ODIHR experts. My country has taken good note of the recommendations contained in the expert report and will make every effort to implement them.

It is 20 years since the fall of the Berlin Wall, which brought in its wake an unprecedented wave of democratization on the European continent and gave new impetus to our Organization, setting new landmarks, particularly in the human dimension, that remain valid today. At the same time, it is evident that not all promises have been kept, not all expectations have been fulfilled and not all commitments have been respected. We are seeing a worrying upsurge in constraints on freedom of assembly, freedom of association, freedom

of expression and freedom of the media in some parts of the OSCE region. It is vital that we comply with all of our commitments to ensure strict respect for these fundamental freedoms, which are at the basis of our free and democratic societies. I therefore emphatically support the adoption here in Athens of a far-reaching decision on freedom of the media and on strengthening pluralism in our societies.

Mr. Chairman,

It gives me particular pleasure that barely 20 years after the fall of the Berlin Wall, Kazakhstan, a former member of the Soviet Union, is preparing to take over the Chairmanship of our Organization.

I firmly believe that with its formidable ambition, which has resulted during the last few years in wide-ranging reforms, and with its resolute progress towards Europe, Kazakhstan will make a rich and original contribution to the development of our Organization.

With this in mind, I should like to extend my best wishes to our dear colleague Kanat and his team for the Chairmanship in 2010, a year full of new challenges and opportunities, and to assure them of our full support.