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**Statement of H.E. Péter Balázs Minister for Foreign Affairs of Hungary  
OSCE Ministerial Council Meeting**

**(Athens, 2 December 2009)**

Mr. Chairman,

At the outset let me express my gratitude to the Government of Greece for its generous hospitality. I would also like to thank the Greek Chairmanship for its efforts and excellent stewardship throughout the year and in particular for successfully steering the dialogue on European security.

Hungary fully subscribes to the statement delivered by the Foreign Minister of Sweden in the name of the European Union. Let me add a few thoughts from the viewpoint of Hungary.

Mr. Chairman,

As you have highlighted in your letter of invitation we celebrate this year the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the dismantling of the Iron Curtain, which began on the border of Hungary and Austria. The CSCE process has been instrumental in overcoming barriers and in managing change. While considerable progress has been made since those historic events further efforts are needed to fully realize our common vision of peace, prosperity and democracy.

In order to achieve this goal there is a need to restore trust and confidence between and among a high number of new actors. I would like to recall that 35 States signed the Helsinki Final Act, while today there are 56 participating States. The dialogue on European security, started a year ago in Helsinki and elevated to a higher level at our informal meeting on Corfu. This dialogue could and should make a valuable contribution to this end. In our view, the comprehensive set of principles of the Helsinki Final Act and the Charter of Paris for a New Europe remain as relevant as ever. The problem is not with the validity of these principles but with deficiencies to comply with them fully. Therefore, the task ahead of us is to strengthen the implementation of existing commitments and their review mechanisms under new and changing conditions, as well as, to find adequate answers to new security threats. In short we should work towards a Helsinki plus.

The OSCE with its comprehensive and cooperative concept of security and inclusive membership should continue to serve as the main forum for such a dialogue. We hope that today we can take the informal process on European security one step further and establish a more structured dialogue. We are also open to holding a summit next year. The agenda should be attractive enough to bring 55 heads of state or government to Astana. Hungary is ready to join efforts to draft such an agenda.

Mr. Chairman,

Participating States can certainly do more in a number of fields in fulfilling existing commitments. In the politico-military dimension the viability of the CFE Treaty has to be restored and the confidence and security building instruments along with the conflict prevention capability of the OSCE should be strengthened. In this respect we welcome the proposals to authorize the Chairmanship or the Secretary General to dispatch limited missions without the prior consent of participating States.

We are convinced that strong political support and further efforts are needed to prevent ethnic tensions, and that this issue should be an integral part of the dialogue on European security. We agree with the remarks of High Commissioner Knut Vollebaek that violations of minority rights and failures to reach accommodation between majorities and minorities have been the main cause of conflict in the OSCE area.

In the economic and environmental dimension the potential of the OSCE to address energy security and security aspects of climate change has to be explored further, by making use of the considerable expertise and mechanisms this Organization has developed in other areas.

In the human dimension we attach great importance to promoting freedom of the media and the rule of law. Human rights and fundamental freedoms are also closely linked with the need to fight intolerance and discrimination. This year we have witnessed manifestations of discrimination and intolerance as well as violent attacks, against Roma people in a number of OSCE participating states, including my own country. This is a plague that requires both political attention and determined efforts from us. It is in this spirit that work on a regional Roma strategy has been launched within the Visegrad group.

Mr. Chairman,

Hungary continues to attach particular importance to the work of OSCE field missions. We regret the closure of the OSCE Mission to Georgia. We fully support the efforts of the Greek Chairmanship to find a solution allowing for a meaningful OSCE presence on the ground. We are convinced that the OSCE can make a valuable contribution to the efforts of the international community within the framework of the Geneva process and support the easing of tensions on the ground.

We must also be responsive to positive developments. Croatia is one of the best examples of the important contribution an OSCE field mission can make to the democratic transformation processes. Croatia is now a full fledged democracy. We are therefore of the view that the present extension of the mandate of the OSCE Office in Zagreb should be the last.

Mr. Chairman,

In conclusion let me offer our full support to the incoming Kazakh Chairmanship and wish you every success. The Kazakh Chairmanship will certainly bring a new approach in the OSCE as this is the first time that a participating State from Central Asia will be at the helm of the Organization. We are convinced that Kazakhstan will make every effort to steer the organization effectively.