

**SPAIN CHAIRMANSHIP'S FOOD FOR THOUGHT**  
ON THE  
**OUTCOME OF THE MADRID MINISTERIAL COUNCIL**

**1. GENERAL REMARKS.**

From the Spanish Chairmanship's point of view, given the surrounding and impending circumstances in the larger international landscape, the recent Madrid Ministerial Council ended on a fairly positive note. Taking into account the previous uncertainties hovering over the future of the Organization, even when it came to its immediate future, the outcome of the Ministerial Council provides for a degree of much needed continuity and predictability while at the same time consolidating the OSCE acquis and opening up promising venues for its engagement in a number of relevant areas.

Far from shying away in front of a daunting task, the Chairmanship decided to take the risk and confront all the relevant political issues in Madrid, controversial as they might be, including consultations on the CFE Treaty. This approach was consistent with the Chairmanship's view that the OSCE has to become again a relevant political forum for tackling the main topics of our day within our common space. As a result, it has already been

said by many participating States that the Madrid Ministerial was one of the most intense meetings, politically speaking, in the recent history of the Organization.

There is also a general feeling that the novelty represented by the Ministerial working lunch - introduced for the first time in the format of a Ministerial Council by the Spanish Chairmanship- highly contributed to increasing the level of the political debate. It is very rare indeed that 56 ministers debate around such a relevant topic as Kosovo in an articulate and constructive manner, but it was done. And, more importantly, it was done within the OSCE framework. There is therefore a converging consensus in the sense that the working lunch was one of the highlights of the Council. It is now for future chairmanships to give continuity to this initiative and, if so deemed convenient, to make it one of our traditions.

## **2. OUTCOME OF THE MADRID MINISTERIAL COUNCIL**

As to the concrete outcome of the Madrid Ministerial, the Chairmanship considers that, inter alia, the following substantial results were achieved:

- First, it was possible, against all odds, to find a solution to the issue of the Future Chairmanships thus ensuring the OSCE continuity for at least three more years after 2008. The already known as the “Spanish compromise” to approve a package of Chairmanships for 2009, 2010 and 2011, with Kazakhstan’s Chairmanship in 2010, required, for certain, more than a light touch of diplomatic finesse. Of course, this outcome was also

made possible due to the flexibility of Greece, Kazakhstan and Lithuania. Congratulations and thanks to all of them. This compromise was per se one of the major results of the Madrid Ministerial, and not precisely a negligible one. It is the opinion of the Spanish Chairmanship that the decision on the three chairmanships could be used to further coordinate the priorities of the Organization till at least 2011.

On this regard, the Chairmanship is also confident that the fact that a Central Asian republic will chair this organization for the first time in its history will contribute to the sense of ownership and inclusiveness. Furthermore, it will help to adapt the OSCE to a new era, since it will further enhance its visibility in a geopolitical area where the OSCE has to face new realities. In fact, not only resolving the Kazakh bid but also re-engaging the Central Asia republics as equal participating States within the OSCE while recognizing their contribution to our common security and stability has been one of the main goals of the Spanish Chairmanship in 2007.

- Second, in line with our shared goal of adapting the OSCE to new challenges and threats, the Decision on OSCE engagement with Afghanistan can also contribute to making this organization more relevant. At the same time it can help stabilizing our Asian partner. It is true that the OSCE has to be very careful not to overstretch its limited resources, but the decision strikes a very delicate balance by keeping its current scope limited without at the same time foreclosing any future decision, if the political will exists, to extend its reach, both geographically and functionally. In the same context, we are satisfied with the adoption of the PC Decision on combating the

threat of illicit drugs and precursors, although it applies not only to Afghanistan but also to the rest of the OSCE area.

Regarding OSCE Partners for Cooperation in general, the Chairmanship attaches particular value to the Ministerial Declaration on Partners for Cooperation and to the PC Decision on the Partnership Fund, which was approved in Madrid after more than a year of difficult negotiations.

- Third, a number of important decisions were adopted in the three dimensions, corresponding in most cases to priorities set out at the beginning of the year by the Spanish Chairmanship. Thus, in the first dimension there was a solid and innovative package in the realm of fighting against terrorism. Concerning another topic that was discussed in the Security Committee during the year, but did not reach consensus, the Chairmanship issued a perception paper on OSCE basic norms and principles in the field of Security Sector Governance/Reform. There was also a very important Decision on the relevant issues of the Forum for Security Co-operation, contributing to the continuity of its activities and enhancing its role as a decision-making body of the Organization, which is also of especial interest for Spain since the Spanish Delegation will hold the Chairmanship of the FSC during the first session in 2008. In the second dimension the OSCE has adopted a Madrid Ministerial Declaration on Environment and Security which is a truly pioneering one since the OSCE becomes the first International Organization to recognize at Ministerial level the link between both concepts and to devote a whole document to this issue. This innovative approach to the environment and the involvement of the OSCE in one of the most important topics on the global agenda, climate change, opens a

promising niche for the future work of the Organization. The Decision on water management was also an important achievement since it is the first time that this sensitive and strategic topic finds consensus in the OSCE. In the third dimension, decisions on combating trafficking of human beings for labor exploitation as well as sexual exploitation of children and on tolerance and non discrimination were also adopted. It is true that the draft decisions on human right defenders and effective participation were not approved, but they were kept alive till the end. Also, no consensus could be found on any decision on elections. But the topic has been discussed and it is the view of the Chairmanship that at some point further debate will be not only unavoidable, but necessary, provided that existing commitments in this field are not undermined.

- Fourth, concerning the topic of legal reform or strengthening of the OSCE, no outcome was possible due to the extreme positions held till the end on both sides of the debate. The unfortunate result is that the wonderful job done by the Dutch Ambassador and the group of legal experts was not duly recognized. At least, by attaching the text of the Convention to the statement of the Chairman in Office the record is kept for a future occasion.

- Finally, it is true that there was no Ministerial Declaration, as it has been the case since 2002, and that it was not possible to find consensus on statements on Moldova and Georgia, though there was a statement on Nagorno Karabakh. But, frankly speaking, very few expected that it was possible to find consensus on this issues given the general political atmosphere. Nevertheless, the Chairmanship managed to keep all the negotiations alive till the very end and in some cases the parties were very

close to an agreement. In any case, by keeping all the parties engaged in those negotiations thus avoiding a further deterioration of some regional dossiers it has been possible to demonstrate that dialogue pays and that in diplomacy, particularly in multilateral diplomacy, “the essence is in the process”. In the particular case of Kosovo, a kind of agreement was reached in Madrid to give some degree of continuity to the mandate of the mission, which, if confirmed at the PC before the end of the year, will be another important achievement coming out of the Ministerial Council.

### **Summing up**

The main legacy of the Madrid Ministerial Council, the so called “Spirit of Madrid”, has been to restore the truly political nature of our Organization. In this sense, Madrid has been at the crossroads in the further adaptative evolution of the OSCE to the changing geopolitical realities. As the Chairman in Office said in his closing remarks, now it is high time, due to the important stakes at play, to consider the convenience of convening an OSCE Summit in the near future to move things forward and to define a new consensus on which to build a shared sense of purpose.