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At the request of the OSCE Delegation of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia the attached statement by the Minister for Foreign Affairs, H.E. Mr. Antonio Milošoski, made at the 17th OSCE Ministerial Council, Athens, 1 – 2 December 2009, is being distributed to all delegations.

17th OSCE Ministerial Council

Address by H.E. Mr. Antonio Milošoski

**Minister for Foreign Affairs of the
Republic of Macedonia**

"The spirit of Helsinki meets the spirit of Athens"

Athens, 1-2 December 2009

Distinguished Mr. Chairman,

Dear Colleagues,

Ladies and Gentlemen

Let me express my pleasure to be here, in Athens, participating in the 17th OSCE Ministerial Council at this critical point of defining the course of our common security and of consolidating the role of the OSCE in the Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian region.

The Republic of Macedonia welcomes the Corfu Process, as a strategic dialogue aimed at revitalizing the Dialogue on European Security. The first OSCE Informal Ministerial Meeting in Corfu witnessed our broad commitment to deal with all security challenges, guided by the principle of co-operative, indivisible and comprehensive security. This will be possible only through the reconfirmation of the OSCE *acquis* in all three dimensions and their full implementation based on the equality of its participating States. It is very encouraging to hear that the tone in Hofburg has been changing. Let us work together to accomplish a jointly set goals. In this regard, the Process proves to be a good kick off for improved and innovated debate.

Indeed, the OSCE remains a key forum for the dialogue on the challenges and prospects of security. I strongly believe that there is room for improvement and more efficient use of its existing tools and mechanisms, rather than inventing new and very likely overlapping ones. I fully subscribe to the EU point of view that the OSCE should focus on the big picture, bringing the dialogue on European security to the new stage by establishing a forward looking agenda and structure.

However, given the nature of the new challenges and the need for cross-dimensional approach, we should never forget to further strengthen our partnership through effective multilateralism, our cooperation with relevant organizations and institutions based on the Platform for Co-operative security, and the involvement of the civil society and academic world.

The fuel for the Process certainly will be the political will. That being said, the added value of my country to the OSCE is rather significant. It offers an excellent example: constructive in terms of regional stability, cooperation and enhancement of good neighborly relations, as well as contributing to the wider peace and security, as in Afghanistan.

The Republic of Macedonia sees no other way, but to contribute to the effectiveness and capacity of the Organization, in a balanced way, indeed. The list of our priorities is quite long: early warning, conflict prevention and resolution,

crisis management and post-conflict rehabilitation; transnational threats that include terrorism, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, organized crime, trafficking in human beings and illicit drugs; arms control and problems related to small arms and light weapons; democratic policing and border management; all forms of intolerance and discrimination; respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms that do not exclusively belong to the state concerned; the rule of law and freedom of media; credible elections and electoral processes; economic and social disparities even more visible in times of the existing global economic crisis; Inter-state and Intra-state conflicts as impediments to the regional economic co-operation, undermining the security of communications and energy transport routes... There are many more.

The unfortunate events of August last year reminded us how the vision of Europe whole, free and at peace, though within reach, can be imperiled quickly. The least we can do is to make sure that the instruments available to us to avert such situations are functioning properly and to restore and enhance trust and confidence throughout the OSCE area.

The new security challenges, often of cross-dimensional nature, put at stake both Security in Europe and Security of Europe. We can fight it only with mutual understanding, consensus-building and joint actions. The future of security in Europe is closely related to the future of the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (the CFE). Although not a State Party to this Treaty, Macedonia has been and is indirectly and directly involved in its implementation, *inter alia* through our contribution to the process of confidence- building and cooperation in the security sector within the region and beyond.

Dear friends,

After listening carefully today's deliberations, I am aware that the spirit of Helsinki definitely meets the spirit of Athens. I hope this joint spirit of new and reinvigorated OSCE will be joining next year the spirit of Astana, enriching the OSCE with more of the Central Asia, but also enriching the Central Asia with more of the OSCE.

I would like to congratulate the incoming Chair, my Kazakh colleague for taking over such an important duty, and wish him successful and fruitful year, which we are all to benefit from.

Let me conclude by congratulating the Greek Chairmanship on having launched the Corfu process which has proven once again that there is no alternative to dialogue on the issues of crucial importance for the OSCE region.

Thank you very much.