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REPUBLIC OF CROATIA
PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF
CROATIA TO THE OSCE, UN AND
INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS IN VIENNA

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**STATEMENT BY THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF CROATIA
AMBASSADOR VLADIMIR MATEK
AT THE FIRST
ANNUAL SECURITY REVIEW CONFERENCE
25 JUNE 2003**

Mr. Chairman,

The Porto Decision to convene this Conference was firmly supported by the Croatian Authorities. It was our understanding that a fruitful dialogue on security challenges was convenient in order to strengthen the cooperation among OSCE participating States in this field.

In this regard, it is our hope to conclude it with a strengthened spirit of partnership and with a clear vision of the role of the OSCE in this field. Sometimes that role includes a major involvement in the subject, and sometimes it is only limited to raise awareness among the participating states. It is up to the working groups to discuss and review these issues and make their recommendations in details, but I would like however to stress some experiences we have in Croatia, hoping that I can serve as a contribution to our work.

In the field of antiterrorism, for example, one of the greatest challenges we faced was the necessity to effectively secure the borders. It was a difficult task, due mostly to the shape of our country. The key for the improvement was successful partnership established both with the EU and with neighbouring countries. Through the CARDS program, Germany as senior partner and Slovenia as junior partner in a twinning project assisted us in the implementation of a comprehensive plan for the improvement of our border control. We believe that the promotion of this kind of international and regional cooperation, through the already existing mechanisms, could be a model to be considered in this Conference.

As a member of the Anti-terrorist Coalition, Croatia devotes special attention to the fulfillment of international standards in its exports and imports of military equipment. A new Law on the Export of Dual-Use Goods is being prepared in consultation with partner countries. The Croatian Government has also adhered to the principles of the European Code of Conduct on Arms Exports. In addition, Croatia has expressed its readiness and interest in further modernizing its national legislation in terms of import/export controls through acceding to other international arrangements in the field of arms control. This includes acceding to the Wassenaar Arrangement (1996) on Export Controls for Conventional Arms and Dual Use Goods and Technologies, the Australia Group (1985) on limiting the transfer of equipment used in the production of chemical or biological weapons agents, as well as the G-7 Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR), (1987).

The Croatian Parliament also ratified six relevant UN Conventions on anti-terrorism, and the procedure for ratification has been initiated for the UN Convention on suppression of financing of terrorism. At the same time, through the Interagency Working Group, the Croatian Government is successfully implementing the Security Council Resolution 1373 on fight against terrorism, as well as the resolutions 1267 and 1373 on the suppression of financing of terrorist groups.

Another important example, where the role of the OSCE is much more visible, refers to the Sub-regional Consultative Commission (SRCC) established in accordance to the article 4 of the Annex 1B of the Dayton/Paris Peace Accords. Through the special representative of the CiO, General Claudio Zapulla, the OSCE is directly involved in the work of the Commission. Again, international partnership and cooperation with the neighbouring countries are in this case the pivotal point for the fulfillment of this sub-regional agreement. We would like to acknowledge the contribution of the OSCE, and single out this case as one of the examples where its involvement can make a difference.

At the same time, this is an example where the OSCE will be tested on its ability to be flexible and recognize the needs of its participating states. For those countries which have fulfilled their obligations under this or other sub-regional agreements, and would like to access the CFE Treaty, the OSCE should be able to become an important partner in the realization of their goals.

With the same aim of strengthening regional security, Croatia as a host with a long list of partners is actively supporting the Regional Arms Control Verification and Implementation Assistance Center, RACVIAC, based in Zagreb and contributing to the compliance of countries from South East Europe with the OSCE Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security and other provisions aimed at fostering transparency and cooperation in the region.

This kind of cooperation and coordination with other international and regional organizations, the institutional flexibility to recognize new challenges to our security, as well as the ability to adapt to a changing and dynamic reality, seem to be essential factors that can lead us successfully to a clear vision of the OSCE role in the European security landscape for years to come

Finally, Mr. Chairman, let me add that the contribution of the OSCE to the promotion of democracy in the region is – and should remain – the focal point in its current activities and new endeavours. The true strength of the OSCE, as well as the security of the OSCE region, are in direct proportion to the strength of the national democratic institutions of each participating state. Neither these domestic institutions cannot be replaced by international organizations, nor can models from abroad successfully be imposed on them. But the OSCE can redouble its efforts to fulfill the requirements of its members, and assist them in strengthening their national democratic institutions. By playing such a role, the OSCE will surely give a significant and visible contribution to the security of the region as a whole.