

14th Meeting of the OSCE Ministerial Council
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Statement by H.E. Mr. Ivailo Kalfin,
Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Bulgaria

ENGLISH only

Mr. Prime Minister,
Distinguished Colleagues,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Allow me at the outset to thank cordially the Chairman-in-Office, H.E. Minister Karel De Gucht and his teams, both in Brussels and in Vienna, for their hard work for our Organization. Enjoying Brussels' hospitality today has a specific flair, for as a venue of international peace, security and cooperation activities your beautiful capital has no peer.

Concurring with the statement of Finland on behalf of the European Union, I would like to bring forth several points in national capacity.

In the recent years the OSCE has invested a significant effort in bringing its activities, structures and operational capacities in correspondence with the need to adequately address the large scope of new threats and challenges to security. The implementation of the "road map" of Ljubljana on **strengthening the effectiveness of the Organization** has dominated our agenda this year.

I am confident that the impressive package of decisions we have before us for adoption would be a substantial step in the right direction. It would be important now to continue on this track and put those decisions into practice. That should permit the Organization to maintain its consistency and relevance for the security and stability in its area.

Mr. Chairman,

The major challenge in the OSCE area that was 'taken' from the last into the new century is the phenomenon we have invented a special name for – **frozen conflicts**. They have diverted enormous human and material resources, and impaired the normal development of states thus generating a permanent threat to the security and stability of countries and regions. These are conflicts with different background, causes and development, and it is hardly feasible to look for 'one-solution-fits-all'. Nevertheless, it is our principle approach that their resolution should be based on respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of states, and be sought with peaceful means through negotiations. It is expedient that the current conflict-resolution and negotiation formats be re-invigorated. We believe that the parties to conflicts should take up their responsibility and put effectively to work the political will they declare. They should refrain from unilateral acts that could jeopardize the settlement process. The Organization, its field missions and other structures involved in the process, the participating States should further provide their expertise and assistance, their good-will and mediation services, for reaching durable solutions that would be accepted by the parties, that would ensure post-conflict reconstruction, and would reinforce security, stability and development in the OSCE region.

We are concerned by the current state of affairs in the area of the **Abkhazian and South-Ossetian conflicts**, and call on the parties to spare no effort to prevent the situation from sliding into insecurity and destabilization, and to return to the negotiating table without delay.

On the **Nagorno-Karabakh** conflict, we welcome the co-operation between the leaders of Armenia and Azerbaijan and the Minsk Group Co-Chairs, and share the recently expressed view of the Co-Chairs that the current year represents a unique window of opportunity for reaching a settlement which, in our opinion, should not be missed.

Bulgaria favors the resumption of negotiations for the resolution of the **Transnistrian conflict** in the “5 + 2” format as soon as possible, and calls on the parties, on mediators and observers to work effectively towards achieving a peaceful and lasting settlement, based on respect for the territorial integrity of the Republic of Moldova and elaboration of a special status for the Transnistrian region.

Mr.Chairman,

Let me turn now to Kosovo where the OSCE has also its presence. The issue of the future status of **Kosovo** stood high on the international agenda in 2006. Bulgaria is a party to a number of regional initiatives aimed at facilitating a durable and just settlement, and appreciates and supports the efforts of President Ahtisaari and his dedicated team. It is of paramount importance that the outcome of this process contributes to stability and security in the region. The effective and significant field presence of the OSCE in Kosovo is a tool that the international community could further make use of in enhancing the democratization process and institution building in the post-settlement period.

Mr. Chairman,

While acknowledging the leading role of the UN in preventing and combating **terrorism**, the OSCE as a regional organization continued to play an important role in support of the antiterrorist efforts of the international community through implementing the relevant OSCE documents and decisions. It is our deep conviction that any action in this area should continue to be based on two fundamental principles: no justification for the crime of terrorism and full respect for human rights when fighting terror.

As a “Troika” member of the **Forum for Security Co-operation** and as FSC Chair during the second session, Bulgaria has actively promoted the Forum’s agenda on implementing the existing commitments to address threats of politico-military nature. We remain committed to the CFE Treaty and call for implementing the remaining Istanbul commitments of 1999 in order to create the conditions to move forward on the ratification of the Adapted CFE Treaty.

The OSCE’s comprehensive approach to security has prompted serious steps in responding to **challenges caused by economic and environmental factors**. Sustainable development, environmental security, transport dialogue and energy security which are the focus of our activities, need to be further addressed by making full use of the potential of the Organization.

The OSCE continues to manifest its unique expertise and value added in the **human dimension** of security. We should be vigilant with respect to the new challenges to security arising in our region, such as trafficking of all kinds, organized crime and xenophobia.

Since 2003 the OSCE has significantly intensified its activities to **promote tolerance and combat discrimination** in the OSCE region. We believe it is imperative that we ensure an effective follow-up and implementation of the recommendations and adopted decisions, through strengthened legislation to combat hate crime and discrimination, developing intercultural and inter-religious dialogue and educational programs to foster mutual respect and understanding.

Bulgaria strongly supports continued and intensified efforts of the OSCE in introducing new tools and initiatives to combat **trafficking**, and especially trafficking in human beings – this abhorrent form of contemporary slavery.

Free and fair **elections** are fundamental for democracy. The OSCE election observation missions, whose solid methodology and expertise are widely recognized by the international community, play a key role in helping strengthen democracy throughout the OSCE area. We appreciate the participation of the members of the Parliamentary Assembly in election observation missions together with observers of ODIHR.

Mr. Chairman,

In a world of multilateralism and growing mutual dependence the OSCE could not proceed on its own. There is an increasing demand both among the participating states and the organizations they belong to for **better interaction** between the international actors in the OSCE area. The Organization has an institutionalized cooperation with most of them.

The same concept of inter-dependency in security has driven the OSCE into extensive partnership with countries from adjacent regions. As I have stated on different occasions, it's my strong conviction that the OSCE is well-suited to serve as bridge between the Euro-Atlantic on one hand and the Mediterranean and Asian security spaces - on the other.

The OSCE brings into those relations its comprehensive approach to security, its principles and commitments, its universal regional character, its field structures and vast expertise. This is the value we could add to joint efforts for the maintaining of security and stability, for upholding democracy and sustainable development in our region and beyond.

Mr. Chairman,

May I, at the end, express once again my recognition for their dedicated efforts to the OSCE institutions and field missions, to the outgoing Belgian Chairmanship and welcome Spain to this difficult but demanding post with the most sincere wishes for success and the readiness to be of help.