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**STATEMENT OF THE HOLY SEE  
TO THE  
12<sup>th</sup> OSCE MINISTERIAL COUNCIL**

by

**H. E. Archbishop Giovanni LAJOLO  
Secretary for Relations with States**

**Sofia, 6 December 2004**

Mr. Chairman,

The Bulgarian Chairmanship has acted with generosity to ensure that this Ministerial Council contributes to defining more clearly the role of the OSCE in the Euro-Atlantic area, nearly 30 years after the signature of the Final Act of Helsinki and 60 years after the end of the Second World War.

The Holy See appreciates this commitment and is convinced of the continuing timeliness and validity of the principles of Helsinki for dealing with the various problems that confront this Organization today.

1. First of all, the question of terrorism and security. The position of the Holy See is well-known: terrorism will only be effectively confronted through a concerted multilateral action that respects the *ius gentium*. The causes of the phenomenon of terrorism, as we all know, are varied and complex: political, social and cultural factors, including those connected to religious pretexts. For this reason, a long-term action is ever more necessary and urgent, one that uses foresight and patience in dealing with the roots of terrorism, preventing its spread and extinguishing its destructive and contagious force. The activities of the OSCE can significantly help to bolster commitment in this direction. The Holy See indeed offers its own specific contribution, in accordance with its nature and mission, through catholic educational and social institutions, as well as through inter-religious dialogue and the defence and promotion of the dignity of the human person.

2. Furthermore, the Holy See considers always with great interest the phenomenon of migration and the intention of this Organization to develop its own activities in this area. Migration has already become a structural element of contemporary society, often changes its cultural and religious composition, and requires the cooperation of both the migrants and the community that accepts them, in mutual respect and in search of the true common good.

Mr. Chairman,

3. Throughout 2004, the OSCE continued to work on issues related to tolerance and non discrimination. This was the framework for the Conferences of Berlin and Brussels. Here in Sofia a strong witness can be given to these efforts through the institution of some Personal Representatives of the Chairman-in-office.

The Holy See appreciates these endeavours, in as much as it has always been on the front lines of the fight against racism, xenophobia and discrimination. Several members of the Catholic Church have paid, oftentimes in person, for their opposition to these perverse phenomena. Additionally, Christians, who constitute the religious majority in the territory covered by the OSCE, in some countries are

also affected by discriminatory norms and behaviour. As a result, the Holy See considered itself obliged to draw attention to and insist upon the necessity of confronting also this problem, so as to guarantee that the OSCE can face discrimination and intolerance in an objective and peaceful way.

In combating these scourges, this Organization must not accept unbalanced solutions: besides being unjust, they would not be in line with its traditionally inclusive approach. It would be paradoxical to ignore the existence of discriminatory measures against Christians, while intending to fight discrimination! Anti-Semitism, discrimination against Muslims and discrimination against Christians must never be placed in a kind of hierarchy! The competent Representative, the ODIHR and the expected Cordoba Conference will have to treat, openly, justly and adequately, also the problem of discrimination against Christians. Only in this way will the participating States be able to come to a proper awareness of this unsettling phenomenon and adopt necessary remedies and solutions. The Holy See will continue to contribute to this engagement in a spirit of dialogue and cooperation, moved by the will to serve effectively the great cause of the human person, which is also the centre of the great causes promoted by the OSCE.

In conclusion, I would like to offer sincere congratulations to the Slovenian Minister, Mr. Dimitrij Rupel, the incoming Chairman-in-office of the OSCE, and to assure him, from this very moment, of the support of the Holy See.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.