

STATEMENT

**BY DR. SOLOMON PASSY
MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE REPUBLIC OF BULGARIA
MEETING OF THE OSCE MINISTERIAL COUNCIL
MAASTRICHT, 1– 2 DECEMBER 2003**

Mr. Chairman,
Dear Colleagues,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Last year in Porto, we reaffirmed our determination to protect our countries and people from existing and emerging threats to security. The evolving security environment creates new challenges for all nations and for the OSCE in particular. The latest terrorist attacks in Istanbul are yet another example of existing and still prevailing threats to individual and global security. Our sympathy and condolences go out to the people who lost relatives and friends. Today, terrorism has become a major factor of instability and one of the main challenges to peace and security in the world. It is our responsibility to mobilize all national and international resources available in the fight against this monstrous evil. We fully support the priority given to this issue within the overall OSCE agenda. In addition to the already existing OSCE anti-terrorism instruments, new measures and activities have been envisaged in the areas of border security and management, combating of trafficking and suppression of terrorist financing.

Mr. Chairman,

The OSCE, as an Organization with broad membership based on the multidimensional concept of common, comprehensive, co-operative and indivisible security has devoted significant efforts to make the OSCE area more stable and secure.

In line with these efforts we welcome the adoption of the new OSCE comprehensive document – Strategy to Address Threats to Security and Stability in the Twenty First Century. Currently, the efficient implementation of the Strategy is of paramount importance. The conclusions drawn from the first OSCE Annual Security Review Conference clearly indicate that the Conference, as an important instrument and a part of the same endeavor, should provide an

auxiliary framework for an enhanced security dialogue and for a review of the security steps undertaken by the OSCE and its participating states.

It is our understanding, that in order to implement the Strategy we must further strengthen the cooperation and interaction with international, regional and sub-regional organizations, so that challenges are addressed together, and the experience and advantages of every Organization are used. We should not fail to benefit from the synergy provided by the continued cooperation with the UN, EU, NATO and other international organizations. This is crucial for the achievement of the Strategy objectives and of the main goals of the OSCE in general. In this context we also support the focusing of joint OSCE and UN activities that address the complex challenges of border monitoring and security. We fully support the view that the OSCE 2004 agenda should pay due attention to these problems by taking a closer look at lessons learned and by structuring a proactive common approach.

The OSCE should continue assisting participating states to strengthen their police capacity, while duly taking into account the need for enhanced human rights protection. Furthermore, the improvement of border security and management in order to promote open and secure borders and to more successfully fight organized crime and other criminal activities should also be a subject of special attention. The measures we endorsed in relation to the travel documents security also constitute an important element of these efforts.

The OSCE has a long-standing history regarding arms control and Confidence and Security Building Measures (CSBM's). By endorsing the decisions of the FSC on MANPAD's (Man-Portable Air Defense Systems), the Document on Stockpiles of Conventional Ammunition and the Best Practice Guide, the OSCE has taken additional steps to enhance international control over systems and equipment that may fall in the hands of terrorists.

We do believe that education has an important role to play in the implementation of a viable and comprehensive concept of security. Education and training already play a vital role in OSCE human rights protection efforts and other activities. They also help raise the human resources needed for a successful transition to prosperous market economies. Education is also vitally important in terms of

empowering individuals and groups with the capacity and capabilities to resolve social conflicts within and among nations.

The OSCE response to the new threats and challenges should include additional efforts to resolve the existing conflicts and to prevent new ones. The activities of the organization should also incorporate assistance with the building of democratic institutions and establishing the rule of law, independent judiciaries, free civil societies and free media.

The Transdniestrian problem has a long history in the OSCE political settlement process. This year significant progress has been achieved towards its solution. We are convinced, that with the joint efforts in the five sided format a settlement, that meets the expectations and the support of the people of Moldova has to be found. The OSCE should stand ready to underpin the political settlement with whatever support is needed.

We welcome the peaceful transition of power in Georgia and commend the efforts of all those, who contributed to this outcome. The OSCE should provide the support Georgia needs in this difficult time and to assist the country in holding the forthcoming elections. This is not only a natural manifestation of the solidarity among OSCE States, it is also part of our shared OSCE values. Although progress in 2003 has been achieved, we look forward for the full implementation of the Istanbul commitments.

Mr. Chairman,

We commend the high priority attached by the Netherlands OSCE Chairmanship to the fight against trafficking in human beings. Bulgaria will support the implementation of the Action Plan as well as the transformation of its mechanism into operational.

I would like to reaffirm our strong commitment to promote tolerance and non-discrimination, and to reiterate our deep concern about the manifestations of aggressive nationalism, racism, chauvinism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism, Islamophobia as well as all forms of discrimination. We appreciate the extensive work by the OSCE, its institutions and field missions in the year 2003 and look forward to the continuation of these efforts in 2004.

It is widely recognized that the security in Europe is linked to security and stability in a wider area of the world. While chairing the OSCE

Contact Group for Mediterranean Partnership, Bulgaria endeavored to bring the Mediterranean Partners closer to the OSCE and to involve them in the work of the Organization on a more regular basis. Our understanding is that outreach activities-the transfer of OSCE experience in specific areas -as well as the increased opportunities for participation of the Mediterranean partners in OSCE activities and working bodies constitute a promising new element of OSCE Partnership.

Today we are adopting the OSCE Strategy Document for the Economic and Environmental Dimension. This Document opens new doors for the OSCE to engage more actively in strengthening cooperation among Participating States, and to implement actions and policies to reinforce good governance and protect the environment. Bringing all the Participating States closer to the basic principles of effective economic management provides important preconditions for ensuring sustainable development in our countries.

The challenge on the way of the OSCE in the coming year is to address the threats to security and stability even more effectively and efficiently and to further promote the basic principles and values that unite us.

The Bulgarian Chairmanship in 2004 is prepared to work together with all participating states to provide continuity in the achievement of these major goals. We are committed to exert all our efforts and capacity for the implementation and the follow-up of all important decisions taken by this respectful body.

Thank you for your attention.

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/CLOSING REMARKS/

Mr. Chairman,
Dear Colleagues,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me assure you that I am honored to take over from you as OSCE Chairman-in-Office.

The OSCE decisions taken by the Maastricht Ministerial represent a big challenge and will require serious and intensive follow-up efforts for their implementation. The Strategy to Address Threats to Security and Stability in the Twenty First Century, the OSCE Strategy Document for the Economic and Environmental Dimension, as well as the other important documents, adopted in Maastricht will guide us in our future endeavors.

Today we adopted a number of important decisions.

Unfortunately, we didn't reach an agreement on some of the topics discussed. We regret that substantive efforts which have been invested did not bring to the results that were envisaged. We expect that next year constructiveness will prevail and the OSCE will be in a position to perform based on a common approach. Certainly, constructiveness may be encouraged by a future, more flexible system of making decisions. Now we should not lose the momentum to go ahead in addressing the major challenges of today and tomorrow and to make the OSCE area more prosperous and secure for the present and the future generations.

I am looking forward to mid-January next year, when I am supposed to present the program of the Bulgarian Chairmanship to the representatives of fifty-five participating states, the Heads of Institutions and Heads of Missions at the Permanent Council in Vienna. We are fully aware of the great responsibilities and difficulties that lay ahead. Therefore in implementing the agenda of the Chairmanship, we will rely on the support of all participating states and on the highly qualified assistance of the OSCE Secretariat

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and the OSCE Institutions. The Field Missions will have our full support.

To conclude, Mr. Chairman, may I express once again our deepest gratitude for the perfect organization of this event and for the

hospitality of the Dutch Government and of the people of the beautiful historic city of Maastricht.

I would also like to congratulate Belgium for its election to Chair the Organization in 2006.

In concluding I would like to stress that we highly appreciate and commend the Dutch Chairmanship for the excellent job and for the extensive efforts exerted during this year. The delegations in Vienna will remember the hard work load during the year of the Dutch Chairmanship. Sometimes it did not bring only smiles as it put more pressure on everybody, but in the end proved to be beneficial for all of us.

We could only express our deep gratitude and highly commend the spirit, the energy and the commitment shown by my distinguished colleague and friend Jaap de Hoop Scheffer in chairing the Organization. It was a particular honor for me to work together with him in the ‘Troika’ in 2003. I wish him wholeheartedly a lot of success in his new and highly responsible duties and as Secretary General of NATO he could help promoting further cooperation between OSCE and NATO. I wish to thank to Portugal. I am also looking forward to continue this fruitful cooperation with my Dutch and Slovenian colleagues in the year to come.

One of my predecessors told me that usually the optimism at the beginning of the Chairmanship is higher than at the end. I do hope that you will help me to refute this vision.

Thank you for your attention.