

Check against delivery

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Statement by Mr. Sven Jürgenson, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Estonia

Mr. Chairman,

2004 has been a significant year. The enlargements of the EU and NATO have altered the political landscape in which OSCE has to operate and contributed to the expansion of the zone of democracy and the rule of law in Europe. The OSCE can take pride in having paved the way to this. What OSCE needs now, is a reflection over its future focus, the tasks and challenges ahead. Only genuine dialogue between participating states, in the spirit of openness and respect, over the way ahead will create a new momentum for the OSCE in the changing world.

Estonia still believes that what we need is a reshaping and not a radical reform. Previous documents and commitments form a solid basis and any change should be based on continuity. For the successful way ahead can only be based on groundwork of previous decisions and earlier commitments taken by participating States.

Mr. Chairman,

The challenges ahead of us are immense.

First, we once again have to register our failure to resolve the so-called frozen conflicts which poison the lives of thousands of people on a daily basis. This year we have seen some positive developments but also some worrying signs of de-freezing. In some instances, the situation is further aggravated by the presence of foreign troops without the consent of the host country. Estonia is looking forward to the day when the remaining Istanbul commitments are fulfilled and the last obstacles to the ratification of the Adapted CFE Treaty are removed and we can request accession to the Adapted Treaty.

We have to remind ourselves constantly that it is not the crisis that is frozen; it is the resolution that is frozen. The lack of real progress is seriously undermining the credibility of the OSCE.

Second. While considerable results have been achieved in combating terrorism, the nightmare keeps coming back, [as yesterdays attacks in Spain and on the United States Consulate in Saudi Arabia so tragically reminded us. The primary role for the OSCE is to focus on means to prevent and suppress terrorism, as reflected in the important decisions before us.

However, fight against terrorism cannot be used as an excuse to justify human rights abuses. Furthermore, attempts to demonize entire nations and religious communities, in the context of the anti-terrorist campaign, resulting in the rise in violence against them will only serve to nurture the breeding ground for terrorism.

Third, the OSCE can and must be instrumental in promoting tolerance and non-discrimination. It is well suited to promote multi-cultural and inter-religious dialogue, and indeed, to address prejudices and misrepresentation. That is why we welcome the decision to appoint Personal Representatives of the Chairman in Office to address these issues.

One cannot fail to notice that in some countries the situation of the human rights and freedom of media has been steadily deteriorating over the past year. OSCE as the human rights watchdog in Europe should make full use of its potential and expertise to reverse this negative trend and promote respect for democratic values throughout its area of operation.

Fourth, one of the unique strengths of the OSCE is the expertise it has acquired in elections monitoring. The importance of that field of the OSCE work was highlighted once more by the elections in Ukraine.

We find the display of independence and resolve by the Ukrainian Supreme Court a very encouraging step towards civic society based on the rule of law. The momentum should not be allowed to wind down. Therefore we should make an effort to provide a maximum number of election monitors for the re-run of the II round of the Presidential elections to ensure that this time the elections outcome can be trusted to represent the will of the Ukrainian people.

A deep and prolonged political crisis in Ukraine will have implications for the security of the rest of Europe. I am convinced we will do everything in our power to support the territorial integrity and democratic development of Ukraine; **and** to help to deescalate tensions to achieve an amicable and non-violent solution to the crisis.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman,