

**STATEMENT BY MR. KAREL DE GUCHT,  
BELGIAN MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND  
OSCE CHAIRMAN-IN-OFFICE, AT THE  
UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL**

New York, 16 January 2006

Mr. Chairman,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I should like first of all to thank you and the other members of the Security Council for inviting me and giving me the opportunity to speak here on behalf of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe.

Belgium has held the Chairmanship of this Organization since 1 January. The assumption of this function is a clear demonstration of its commitment to multilateralism and international co-operation.

The OSCE is a regional organization in the meaning of Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations. It played an essential role in bridging the gap that divided Europe during the Cold War. Since that time it has developed a body of commitments, norms and principles that bind all its members. This constitutes the essence of modern collective security in the widest sense of the term. I should like to reiterate here our profound attachment to these common principles, which are also shared by the United Nations.

Following the many challenges to be confronted in 2005, the contribution made by the OSCE through its transversal mandate to peace and security in Europe is now better recognized. Moreover, the Organization is in better shape today than it was at the start of last year. The Ministerial Council meeting in Ljubljana last December was an occasion for renewed dialogue and better understanding. Belgium therefore takes on its new responsibilities with optimism.

I should like now to present the main themes of our programme for our Chairmanship of the OSCE.

We shall be called upon, first, to play an active role in the institutional reform of the OSCE. At the Ministerial Council meeting in Ljubljana agreement was reached on a revision of the scales of contribution and on a road map for the institutional reforms of the OSCE aimed at adapting it better to the current challenges. This road map marks out the areas in which reform negotiations need to be conducted under the Belgian Chairmanship. We attach considerable importance to it and we shall take this responsibility very seriously. I intend to appoint a high representative of my administration to complete this work.

Second, Belgium will seek to establish a better balance between the three dimensions — politico-military, economic and human — of the OSCE's comprehensive approach to security. It will endeavour to strengthen the economic and environmental dimension, with particular emphasis on regional co-operation and security in the transport sector.

In reality, security can never be established for good. It requires constant attention, continuing investment and shared responsibility. The changes that have occurred since the establishment of the OSCE have been immense and for the most part positive. The risk of a conflict on a European scale has disappeared. But security and stability in Europe remain one of the principal concerns of the OSCE. There cannot be democracy without stability. Conversely, peace and security are contingent on respect for democracy, civil liberties and human rights. There cannot be lasting stability without economic development.

On the subject of transport and strengthening the economic dimension, the Belgian Chairmanship would also like to focus on the special situation of landlocked countries. We intend to co-operate with the United Nations High Representative for Landlocked Developing Countries and to help in the implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action approved at Almaty in 2003. We should also like to strengthen co-operation between the OSCE and the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe so as to foster the implementation of legal norms and instruments.

Third, the combating of international crime and promotion of the rule of law will be a central focus. Alongside terrorism, transnational crime is one of the most serious new threats for our societies. The extent of this threat was recognized in the outcome declaration of the United Nations Summit in September 2005. It is also a problem that concerns our citizens.

The fight against organized crime is not a new theme for the OSCE as can be seen from its plans and activities to combat trafficking in human beings, illicit drug and arms trafficking, the laundering of money derived from criminal activities, and corruption. The OSCE has instruments at its disposal for strengthening the rule of law and training the police and judiciary. Our Chairmanship will endeavour to consolidate this *acquis*, give new impetus to the OSCE's activities in this area and introduce some new ideas.

In the fight against organized crime, the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime of 2002, known as the Palermo Convention, is the legal instrument par excellence. The OSCE offers a useful framework for fostering its ratification and providing specific support in its implementation in the OSCE participating States.

Fourth, Belgium will endeavour to contribute to conflict prevention and crisis management. Attention will be devoted specifically to Kosovo and the "frozen" conflicts, as they are called, in Moldova-Transdnistria, Nagorno-Karabakh and Georgia-South Ossetia.

The OSCE as such has neither the authority nor the means to impose a solution. It does, by contrast, have the task of providing a framework and facilitating the emergence of a solution provided that there is a genuine willingness to negotiate on the part of the principal parties concerned.

The question of Kosovo will be a particular focus of the Belgian Chairmanship. Today the OSCE Mission in Kosovo (OMIK) is the largest of all the OSCE missions, with about 1,000 persons in the field throughout Kosovo, including the villages and regions inhabited by the Serbian minorities. In collaboration with the United Nations mission (UNMIK), the OSCE mission plays an important role in the reconstruction of Kosovo. Its work is devoted in particular to the protection of minorities, decentralization, democratization, promotion of human rights, elections, police training and support for the administration.

Under the Belgian Chairmanship, there will be a need to evaluate the future role of the OSCE Mission in Kosovo. The United Nations mission (UNMIK) is to be gradually wound down, which will result in the transfer of tasks and competences to other organizations, including the European Union and the OSCE. Intensified dialogue and close co-operation between the United Nations, the European Union, the OSCE, NATO and other principal actors will be indispensable to Kosovo's future.

Mr. Kofi Annan, the United Nations Secretary-General, has appointed Mr. Martti Ahtisaari as Special Envoy to lead the process to determine the final status of Kosovo. The OSCE will be called upon to contribute to the implementation of the final status. That being the case, it will be important for it to play its role to the full, again at an early stage, among the international bodies concerned.

In Moldova, the OSCE plays an important role in mediation and in determining the future status of Transdnistria. During its OSCE Chairmanship, Belgium hopes to make a constructive contribution to the negotiations on this status.

In 2005, we saw a rapprochement between Armenia and Azerbaijan on the issue of Nagorno-Karabakh. The Belgian Chairmanship hopes to contribute actively to the peace process and to the efforts by the Minsk Group so that this rapprochement will result in a settlement of the conflict in 2006.

In Georgia, the United Nations plays a central role in the attempts at conciliation with Abkhazia. In South Ossetia, this central role is played by the OSCE. We hope that the recent advances will open up the way to a peaceful settlement of the conflict. At the same time, the OSCE is currently carrying out an economic needs assessment. The Belgian Chairmanship is willing to organize a donor conference in 2006 if required.

The OSCE is also very active in the field of democratization. In this regard, election monitoring is an important instrument, even if it is sometimes contested. I am convinced of the usefulness of this work and intend, as Chairman-in-Office, to ensure that observation missions will be able to continue to fulfil the tasks for which they were created, in other words to contribute in an impartial manner to democratic development. In my function as Chairman-in-Office of the OSCE, I believe that it is the duty of participating States to make full and timely use of the existing instruments designed to ensure the transparency of electoral processes and to guarantee their viability. In my capacity as Chairman-in-Office, I have appealed to the Government of Belarus to invite the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) to observe the forthcoming presidential elections.

Mr. Chairman,

These are the priorities of our OSCE Chairmanship. But our programme is broader than this. We shall continue and develop other major thrusts within the OSCE. I am thinking in particular of tolerance and non-discrimination and the fight against trafficking in human beings. Within the politico-military dimension of the OSCE, we shall be organizing a major seminar on military doctrines in February 2006. Regarding the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, the OSCE adopted a decision at the recent Ministerial Council meeting in Ljubljana calling for the implementation by all participating States of Security Council resolution 1540. Moreover, we shall commit ourselves actively to combating the illicit

trafficking in small arms and light weapons, the OSCE's activities being in line with the United Nations Programme of Action.

We shall also focus particularly on the link between the environment and security. In this regard, we shall endeavour to promote the Environment and Security Initiative, which involves the United Nations, the OSCE, and NATO in projects for the destruction of dangerous products.

Finally, terrorism has been recognized both by the United Nations and the OSCE as one of the most important new threats. The OSCE Plan of Action for combating Terrorism falls within the general framework of United Nations conventions and General Assembly and Security Council resolutions. OSCE participating States have undertaken to ratify and implements the United Nations conventions and protocols. Within the OSCE Secretariat, the Action against Terrorism Unit (ATU) has been set up to supervise the implementation of existing United Nations instruments and to provide technical assistance to participating States in combating terrorism. The Belgian Chairmanship intends to continue to move forward on the basis of the OSCE Plan of Action and to foster co-operation between the OSCE and the United Nations, and in particular the Security Council's Counter-Terrorism Committee.

Mr. Chairman,

The United Nations and the OSCE share the same values. The two organizations have a large number of fields of action in common, including important areas such as respect for human rights, democratization, protection of minorities, conflict prevention, crisis management, combating organized crime and terrorism, and protection of the environment.

I should also like to assure you of our full support for the principles and recommendations contained in Security Council resolution 1631 adopted in October 2005, which is designed to strengthen co-operation and consultation between the United Nations and regional organizations while recognizing the primary responsibility of the Security Council for peace and international security.

During its Chairmanship of the OSCE, Belgium will endeavour to further promote the synergies and complementarities between the United Nations and the OSCE. It is for this reason that I wanted to inform you from the beginning of our Chairmanship of the OSCE's activities.

Mr. Chairman,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

These are the main themes of a programme that is both ambitious and realistic. It is ambitious because it involves a good number of new orientations while also intensifying existing ones; it is realistic because we are aware that no progress will be possible without the agreement of the 55 participating States in the Organization.

The Belgian Chairmanship sees itself as an honest broker working for the good of the Organization as a whole and for the benefit of all its members.

Good co-operation between the OSCE and the United Nations is essential in this respect.

The Belgian Chairmanship would like to contribute to this aim. It feels confident that it will be able to respond to the challenge. I trust that I will be able to benefit from your support and co-operation.

Thank you for your attention.