



MINISTERIO DE  
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SECRETARIA DE ESTADO  
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DIVISION ASUNTOS  
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## **The 2007 Spanish Chairmanship of the OSCE**

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Chairmanship of the OSCE**

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In December 2004, the Council of Ministers of the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), held in Sofia, decided by consensus that Spain would hold the rotating Chairmanship of this major regional organisation during the upcoming year, 2007.

The OSCE, heir and successor to that extraordinary Conference for Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) which in 1975 adopted the Helsinki Final Act, and which contributed in a fundamental way to the end of the Cold War and the disappearance of barriers and blocs in Europe, is, today, the most important international regional organisation. Its 56 member states cover an impressive geographic spectrum, from Vancouver to Vladivostok.

Based on the Helsinki legacy, the OSCE has become known as a multidimensional forum for dialogue and co-operation, whose fundamental merit has been the establishment of principles and values expressed in political commitments which have served to create a security framework for relations amongst its members. The OSCE has thus become a valuable instrument for early warning, conflict prevention, crisis management, and post-conflict rehabilitation (to use the terms established by the OSCE itself).

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Next year, Spain will hold the Chairmanship at a crucial moment for the OSCE's future, because, like other international organisations, at this beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century a debate has arisen questioning its structure and its very meaning within a shifting geopolitical scenario characterised, among other events, by the processes of European Union expansion, the transatlantic debate and the transformation of NATO, the new role and position of Russia, the emergence of Central Asia as a strategic actor, and the appearance of co-operation structures within the post-Soviet space.

To assume the Chairmanship of the only security structure that brings together both the Euro-Atlantic community and the Euro-Asian space therefore involves both a challenge and an opportunity for promoting Spain's presence abroad, and for our foreign policy. To meet this challenge and take advantage of this opportunity, it will be necessary to define a series of objectives and priorities, based on the elements detailed below.

Firstly, Spain will certainly be concerned with ensuring the continuity of the work and projects already underway. However, having said this, it is also true that we will want to contribute, through our own personality and vision of the world, to the goals of peace and security that unite us all. In this sense, Spain will work to strengthen the OSCE's capacities as a forum for dialogue and co-operation. If the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) was, in its day, an efficient and decisive instrument for ending the Cold War and the confrontation between the two blocs, this was due, above all, to its value as a forum for dialogue, which offered efficient formulas for co-operation. Today, for example, only through a real dialogue will we be able to solve the conflicts that are still open in our region (Transdnistria, South Ossetia, and Nagorno-Karabakh), and which have been festering for too many years.

Spain wants to contribute to enabling the OSCE to develop all of its capacities for crisis prevention and management, and post-conflict

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rehabilitation. To achieve this, and from the viewpoint of the global and comprehensive concept of security presiding over this organisation's work, the Spanish Chairmanship will also pay special attention to the fight against terrorism, the management of possible conflicts at different stages, and the improvement of both civil and military crisis management mechanisms.

Regarding the economic and environmental dimensions of the OSCE, Spain has already taken a major turn by orienting its activities towards the area of the environment. Indeed, the OSCE has already approved the proposal made by Spain to consider this as its principal theme in this area for 2007: that of the challenge to our collective security raised by the problem of the degradation and contamination of the soil, and the need to move towards rational and efficient water management. With this initiative, Spain wants to give the OSCE a leading role in dynamising this field, which is crucial for our future. At the end of our Chairmanship we would like for the organisational work involving these issues to be at a point where we could propose in Madrid an environmental strategy which would serve to specify and develop the commitments already assumed by the OSCE in 2003 at Maastricht.

Regarding the area of what is known in OSCE terminology as the human dimension, our primary concern will definitely be that of preserving, strengthening, and further developing the impressive record that the OSCE has accumulated to date.

However, we also believe that we can make a special contribution here, as well. We believe that in order for our societies to become truly democratic, they should be based on foundations of respect for diversity, strengthening of participation mechanisms, and defence of plurality. These foundations and concepts open up a very wide range of possibilities for action affecting every country in our organisation, both the consolidated, veteran democracies and young countries in a transition phase. In today's globalised world, it is essential that we accept and embrace diversity,

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promoting the democratic participation of all the members and collectives of our societies, truly developing the framework of peaceful co-existence necessary for the plurality which already exists in them.

During our Chairmanship we shall work to strengthen the Organisation's ties with its Partners for Co-operation, both Asian and Mediterranean. Within this area, Spain hopes to be able to make an efficient contribution, due to its special sensitivity and experience, to strengthening the Mediterranean dimension of the OSCE, thus following the path already blazed by the Helsinki Final Act in 1975.

In sum, through its upcoming Chairmanship of the OSCE during the year 2007, Spain hopes to be consistent with its firm belief in dialogue and co-operation as basic instruments for carrying out international relations. We would like to promote effective multilateralism as an adequate framework for dealing with and overcoming international problems, and avoiding new fault lines and confrontation between blocs. And we will work to help to establish and consolidate democracy, rule of law, and respect for human rights in every international sphere as the best guarantee for our collective security and the development of our peoples.

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