



**Statement by the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office  
Foreign Minister of Greece H.E. Mrs. Dora Bakoyannis**

**18<sup>th</sup> Annual Session of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly  
Vilnius, 30 June 2009**

Mr President,  
Excellencies  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I thank the Lithuanian authorities for hosting the 18<sup>th</sup> Annual Session of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly. This initiative highlights the leadership role that Lithuania already plays in the OSCE, and the excellent preparations this country, its leaders and its society are taking to lead the Organization in 2011.

It is a pleasure to be here. The OSCE has always benefitted from the ideas that the Parliamentary Assembly generates. Especially when times are challenging, the exchange of fresh ideas is vital for the good health of the Organization and for stimulating the participating States to act in new directions.

Being myself a Parliamentarian, I have a great appreciation for the Parliamentary Assembly's role and added value it brings to our Organization. I maintain close links with all the members of the Greek delegation to the PA and I cooperate closely with Panayiotis Skandalakis my Personal Representative for election-related issues, and with Petros Efthymiou who is the Chairman of the Second Committee of the Parliamentary Assembly, as well as with the Finnish Vice-President of the Parliamentary Assembly Kimmo Kiljunen, whom I have appointed as the CiO Representative for election-observation mechanisms and who reports personally to me.

The Reports presented to this Annual Session and the topics covered by the Supplementary Items highlight the collective ingenuity of the Parliamentary Assembly. The reports on food security and the economic crisis, the items on energy security, Afghanistan and the freedom of expression propose new angles to important subjects. This is useful work.

In my presentation, I wish to address three issues to which the Greek Chairmanship is devoting substantial time and energy. First, the need to take the OSCE forward in the economic and environmental dimension. Second, the objective of building lasting stability and security in Georgia. Third, the process of launching a new high-level dialogue on European security.

Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I wish to start with the Second Dimension of the OSCE. In the current climate, I believe that it is vital the participating States make the fullest possible use of OSCE commitments in the economic and environmental dimension, and that we realize the Organization's potential in assessing and mitigating the security impact of economic challenges.

The global financial and economic crisis is having an impact across the OSCE area. The crisis shows different faces in different parts of our region, but it is felt everywhere. Where the OSCE has the mandate and the tools to act, Greece is ready to mobilize action. I believe that it is incumbent on all members of the OSCE family to monitor carefully the fall-out of the crisis as it unfolds over the year. I am particularly worried that the crisis may give rise to new forms of instability inside our societies.

One issue to watch closely is the dangerous inter-mingling of the economic crisis with rising energy security problems. This situation could become acute as some participating States are unable to finance their energy needs. I mention this example because experience shows that energy crises are generally predictable.

The OSCE, and the Greek Chairmanship, is acting to tackle some of these challenges.

On the security of energy supplies, the Greek Chairmanship started the year by reminding participating States of the commitments they agreed in the *OSCE Strategy Document for the Economic and Environmental Dimension*, adopted in Maastricht in 2003. The Maastricht Document provides a starting point to undertake a working-level dialogue on these complex issues.

In this respect, next week's Chairmanship Conference on "Strengthening Energy Security in the OSCE Area" in Bratislava is important. I look forward to reporting back to you on the results later in the year.

As you know, the 17th OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum on "Migration management and its linkages with economic, social and environmental policies to the benefit of stability and security in the OSCE region" was held in Athens in May.

Another daunting challenge involves questions raised by uncontrolled migratory movements. Such movements present challenges in all three dimensions. They involve the participating States, their border management systems, their judiciaries. These questions also, let us not forget, involve individuals. Our starting point must remain the protection of the inherent dignity of each and every individual. In the run-up to the Forum and in Athens, participating States examined the cross-dimensional aspects of the migration phenomenon. I am pleased that a results-driven dialogue has started.

Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Since the beginning of this year, the Greek Chairmanship has sought tirelessly to embed stability and security in Georgia. Our efforts have taken several strands.

First, Greece committed itself to continue the efforts of the previous Chairmanship to build a consensus on the continuation of the OSCE presence in Georgia. The adoption of the PC Decision in February on the prolongation of the mandate of the OSCE's Military Monitors until 30 June led to a new round of intensive consultations and gave hope that further progress was within reach.

Regrettably, despite best efforts, consensus could not be reached. As a result, one of the largest OSCE field operations in the region closed its doors yesterday - this, despite the clear need for an OSCE presence to contribute to security and stability in the region which has been recognized by many participating States.

Please allow me to say the obvious: we have not given up. If the sides wish it, Greece stands ready to continue to facilitate consultations on a comprehensive OSCE presence in Georgia. The OSCE's experience, its diverse toolbox, its inclusiveness and its comprehensive approach to security are unparalleled assets for the international community. For those most directly affected by the conflict, these assets are irreplaceable. The same points are true for the role of the United Nations mission, whose mandate has been ended.

The closure of the Mission does not mean the end of the OSCE in Georgia. The OSCE remains active on the ground, in seeking to promote comprehensive security, through the work of the Office of Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, the High Commissioner on National Minorities, the Representative on Freedom of the Media, the Office of the Coordinator for Economic and Environmental Activities, as well as other Secretariat thematic units.

In the meantime, and this is a second main strand of activity, we remain committed to the Geneva Discussions, which the OSCE co-chairs together with the UN and the EU. Five rounds of these discussions have been held, with a sixth round meeting today. Stemming from Geneva, the Incident Response and Prevention Mechanisms have met twice on the ground. These are positive steps, and the common front in Geneva presented by the UN, the EU and the OSCE is vitally important. But we should be honest, all the hard work remains ahead of us. We are ready for this.

Linked to this, the Greek Chairmanship has sought to rebuild elements of confidence on the ground between communities. In this, I have benefitted greatly from the dedication of my Special Envoy, Ambassador Christopoulos. I am pleased that his work is already paying off - on natural gas provision, and issue of water supplies in and around South Ossetia. We have started a process that is important for people's lives and livelihoods.

Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I arrive in Vilnius directly from the island of Corfu, where OSCE Foreign Ministers met to take forward a high-level dialogue on the future of European security.

The informal ministerial discussions in Corfu built on a process that started during the Helsinki Ministerial Council, and that has continued in Vienna, including during the Winter Meeting of the OSCE Parliamentary assembly.

The discussion in Corfu was vibrant and covered the basic principles of interaction between States, the implementation of commitments across the three dimensions, and also concrete issues affecting the security of Europe as well as in Europe.

Ministers also stressed the importance of comprehensive and indivisible security, as well as the full implementation of the commitments that are its embodiment in practice. Ministers agreed that concrete actions should be taken to rebuild trust and the spirit of co-operative security. The discussions underscored both the continued relevance of existing security institutions and the need to maximize their ability to deal with modern challenges.

The informal meeting has allowed us to launch a “Corfu Process” whose objectives are three-fold: first, to maintain and improve existing structures; Second, to enhance co-operative security across the OSCE area; and Third, to achieve the maximum implementation of existing commitments, including on conflict resolution and arms control.

The OSCE is the natural “anchor” for such a process – thanks to its inclusive membership, its comprehensive security concept and its rich experience as a negotiating platform and an actor on the ground. From Corfu, our objective is set now on Athens and on launching a more structured dialogue. I have no illusions that this will be easy. I also know that it is necessary.

Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

In conclusion, I wish to echo a point made by the Secretary General in Corfu.

Challenging times underline the responsibilities shared by all members of the OSCE family. The structures that make up the OSCE were created with a single objective - to assist the participating States in implementing the commitments they have entered into and to help the process of defining new engagements in response to new needs.

This is our common *raison d'être*. Only on this foundation can we move together towards fostering greater security across such a varied and diverse area as the OSCE. This responsibility stretches from the Field Operation to the Institutions and the Parliamentary Assembly, including on the practice of election observation.

I am personally devoted to maintaining the highest standards for OSCE election observation activities. This year has seen and will see challenging elections in the OSCE region, and it is essential that election observation remains a flagship activity of the Organization. Needless to say, co-operation between the ODIHR and the Parliamentary Assembly remains a key to our common success.

Finally, I would like to invite you all to the Fall Session of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly which will take place in Athens in October and we are looking forward to offering you the traditional Greek hospitality.

Thank you.