



REGERINGSKANSLIET

Ministry for Foreign Affairs  
Sweden

## OSCE Ministerial Council December 4-5, Brussels

### Statement by Mr. Frank Belfrage, State Secretary for Foreign Affairs

Mr. Chairman,

Sweden obviously fully associates itself with the statement just made by Finland on behalf of the EU. I also thank the President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly for his thought-provoking speech. The continued, close involvement of the Assembly in the work of our organisation – the parliamentary dimension – is of crucial importance to us. Let me now offer you a Swedish national perspective to the work of the OSCE.

Our Secretary General, Mr de Blichambaut, underlined – and rightly so – that the OSCE is, above all, a value-based organisation. Its normative foundation is our common heritage and our common responsibility. Democracy, respect for human rights and the rule of law are *a sine qua non* for long-term stability, sustainable growth and prosperity.

It is against this background that we welcome ODIHR's report, which firmly establishes the need for all of us to continue to focus on fulfilling the norms and commitments within the human dimension. It is clear, however, that we still have a long way to go here.

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Other important normative elements of the OSCE are the arms control agreements as well as the confidence and security building measures, which have significantly contributed to the military stability in Europe that we experience today.

In this context I pay tribute to OSCE's work on Small Arms and Light Weapons and Conventional Ammunition. In particular Sweden welcomes the Memorandum of Understanding signed between the OSCE Secretariat and UNDP in June this year.

Mr. Chairman,

Conflict prevention, crisis management and post-conflict rehabilitation remain at the heart of the OSCE undertakings.

In addressing the new challenges – terrorism, transnational organised crimes, trafficking in human beings among others – we have progressively developed a solid set of action plans, norms, decisions. Key now is implementation.

Thanks not the least to its field operations, the OSCE has effective means to do so. The field missions are the obvious strength of the OSCE. This particular instrument, combined with the organisation's exceptional ability to act flexibly and purposefully, is in fact the hallmark of the OSCE.

Here I would like to mention Kosovo, which clearly will be one of the most important issues to handle next year. With its extensive presence on the ground, the OSCE is well placed to take on a critical role in securing Kosovo's future as a stable part of the region.

Mr. Chairman,

Having given due praise to the organisation, we must also of course be able to look self-critically upon ourselves. What and

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how can we do better? The strengthening of the effectiveness of the OSCE is indeed crucial. It is the hope of my delegation that we will be able to adopt some important decisions in this regard here in Brussels.

One important part of this self-assessment is how to further improve the election monitoring activities. It is for the ODIHR, as an autonomous OSCE-institution, to take the lead in this respect. For our part we believe that there is scope for a number of practical measures that would strengthen ODIHR's work.

Mr. Chairman

We regret that the so called frozen conflicts remain frozen. The reason for this is not a lack of diplomacy but of political will. Good and neighbourly relations is in every country's long-term interest. We will continue to support the OSCE in its efforts to solve these conflicts. And the responsibility to do so lies with all participating States.

Finally, let me say a few words about Sweden's priorities in some particular areas of the OSCE. The work regarding Small Arms, Light Weapons and Conventional Ammunition is, as I mentioned, one example. We are pleased that the OSCE's work is becoming increasingly operational.

The fight against terrorism is another, in which Sweden will continue to be a constructive partner.

The promotion of gender mainstreaming is a third. Sweden has made consistent efforts to see to that the UNSCR 1325 on women, peace and security is implemented also within this organization.

Much of our efforts in this field have been focused in the human dimension. Time has come for the more cross-dimensional approach. One very concrete step to introduce the issue in the politico-military dimension could be to include a question on

the implementation of UNSCR 1325 in the Code of Conduct questionnaire.

Let me close my remarks by thanking the Secretary General and the Belgian Chairmanship for a job extremely well done and wish the incoming Spanish Chairmanship all the best in its very important endeavours.

I thank you.