



## Joint Declaration 17<sup>th</sup> High-level "2+2" meeting

**Madrid 3 May 2007:** The Chairman of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, Foreign Minister of San Marino, Fiorenzo Stolfi, the OSCE Chairman-in-Office, Foreign Minister of Spain, Miguel Angel Moratinos, the Secretaries General of the two Organisations, Terry Davis and Marc Perrin de Brichambaut, met in Madrid on 3 May 2007 at the invitation of the Council of Europe San Marino Chair for the 17<sup>th</sup> Council of Europe–OSCE High-level meeting.

The participants reaffirmed their commitment to enhancing co-operation between the OSCE and the Council of Europe, in order to ensure complementarity and avoid unnecessary duplication of activities.

They commended the work of the Council of Europe - OSCE Coordination Group which had its fifth meeting on 2 March 2007 in Vienna. Welcoming progress in the four priority areas, namely action against terrorism, the protection of the rights of persons belonging to national minorities, combating trafficking in human beings and promoting tolerance and non-discrimination, the participants called on the focal points to intensify efforts in identifying opportunities for joint action and organising joint events.

The meeting devoted particular attention to cooperation in **promoting tolerance and non-discrimination**. It was agreed that, with the support of the focal points dealing with this matter, this established co-operation should be further enhanced with emphasis on joint activities to be conducted in the fields of youth and intercultural and inter-religious dialogue. The conclusions of the European Conference on the religious dimension of intercultural dialogue organised by the San Marino Chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on 23 and 24 April 2007 and the work of the OSCE/ODIHR Advisory Panel of Experts on Freedom of Religion or Belief in developing “guiding principles” on teaching about religion in public schools should serve as a reference for the development of activities in this field. The Spanish OSCE Chairmanship drew the attention of the participants to the forthcoming OSCE conference on Combating Discrimination and Promoting Mutual Respect and Understanding, to be held in Bucharest on 7 and 8 June 2007, as well as to its intention to convene a Conference in Cordoba next October, to examine the issue of intolerance against Muslims.

The San Marino Chairman of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe thanked the Spanish Chairmanship of the OSCE for its valuable contribution to the

Conference held in San Marino. The participants expressed their satisfaction with the lively debate and the interesting conclusions of this Conference, which represents a step forward in the effective implementation of intercultural and inter-religious dialogue, a common objective of both Organisations.

The participants expressed satisfaction with the conclusions reached at the Tripartite meeting held in Vienna on 14 February between the United Nations, the OSCE and the Council of Europe that efforts should be stepped up, within their respective mandates, to **prevent and combat terrorism**, thus contributing to the implementation of the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, adopted by the UN General Assembly on 8 September 2006. The Council of Europe international conference "Why terrorism? Addressing the conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism", held on 25-26 April in Strasbourg, with the involvement of the OSCE was another example of cooperation in this field. Further steps should be taken towards the organisation of joint initiatives in this area.

The forthcoming launch of a joint publication "National Minority Standards - A Compilation of the OSCE and Council of Europe texts" was welcomed by the participants as a step forward in cooperation in the field of the **protection of the rights of persons belonging to national minorities**.

The participants encouraged the focal points to develop collaboration further in the direction of joint actions contributing to each other's efforts in addressing all forms of **trafficking in human beings** and the increased threats and new challenges to human security. The meeting reiterated the call for a rapid ratification of the *Council of Europe Convention on action against trafficking in human beings* so that the Convention could enter into force and stressed the significance of the implementation of the OSCE anti-trafficking commitments as a strong political instrument to eradicate modern forms of slavery.

Co-operation between the two organisations on a number of regional issues was discussed. Special attention was paid to continued building on good practices of co-operation, creation of synergies and harmonisation of work between the OSCE and the Council of Europe in the field.

The two organisations will be following closely the parliamentary elections in **Armenia** on 12 May, which will be a test of Armenia's progress along the road to democracy, and expect that they will be democratic, in full compliance with the relevant international standards. Participants underlined that the Armenian authorities and all political forces in Armenia have particular responsibilities in this respect, and called upon them to secure a free and peaceful election campaign. Particular reference was made to the need to follow the recommendations formulated by the Council of Europe/Venice Commission and the OSCE/ODIHR regarding the legal framework for election, as well as to secure an equitable access by political parties and candidates to the media in the run-up to the elections. The importance of a joint observation of these elections was reiterated.

The tension that has become apparent in recent weeks between the political forces in **Ukraine** has been a source of concern for the two organisations who confirmed their confidence in the political maturity of the Ukrainian people and in the sense of responsibilities of their leaders to find a peaceful solution to the crisis in keeping with democratic standards and the rule of law. Participants took note of the actions taken in this respect by both organisations in the recent days and confirmed their readiness to examine any request for assistance the Ukrainian authorities might make. The forthcoming appointment of the Representative of the Secretary General of the Council of Europe in Ukraine and his cooperation with the OSCE Project-coordinator in Ukraine should enhance co-operation.