

MC.DEL/35/07  
29 November 2007

ENGLISH  
Original: SPANISH

**STATEMENT BY HER EXCELLENCY MS. MERITXELL MATEU PI,  
MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE PRINCIPALITY OF  
ANDORRA, AT THE FIFTEENTH MEETING OF THE  
OSCE MINISTERIAL COUNCIL**

Madrid, 29 November 2007

Mr. Chairman,

In the first place, allow me to associate myself with the congratulations and thanks offered to Minister Miguel Ángel Moratinos and his team for the excellent work accomplished by them during the Spanish Chairmanship in 2007. Thanks are also due to them for the cordial welcome given to us in Madrid.

We are privileged to have an excellent forum for dialogue with a multidimensional focus on security which constitutes a basic pillar of the international architecture. The success of the OSCE depends in large measure on the political will of the participating States in meeting their commitments with respect to the promotion of human rights, democracy and the rule of law. These principles, commitments and values, as well as the practical application thereof, are essential elements for guaranteeing prosperity and security from Vancouver to Vladivostok, or from Reykjavik to Ankara.

A country like Andorra can do no more than build itself around the ideals and values relevant for the safeguarding and promotion of democracy, human rights and fundamental freedoms, the rule of law and multilateralism, all of which are bound to constitute the axes of policy in a country as small as mine. I should like to reiterate here today our commitment to these principles, which prompts us to continue participating in projects and efforts designed to promote these values.

We live in a global society in which threats and challenges can be both multidimensional and transnational in character. They affect all States equally and it is necessary to ensure adequate co-operation and co-ordination in order to confront them — within the OSCE, between States and the Secretary General, the institutions and missions on the ground and the Parliamentary Assembly; and outside the OSCE it is essential to ensure complementarity with other international organizations with a view to avoiding duplication.

The agenda of the OSCE is growing larger every year, and for that reason we think it would be a good idea to define priorities and develop coherent, co-ordinated and substantial programmes which would lend greater visibility and efficacy to our Organization.

We appreciate the work of the OSCE institutions, of the Parliamentary Assembly and of the three representatives of the Chairman-in-Office whose task it is to combat intolerance and discrimination.

We have confidence in the professionalism and impartiality of the OSCE institutions and also appreciate the work of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) as a cornerstone in the promotion of democracy and human rights. Moreover, we are open to innovative and constructive ideas which seem likely to improve the methods used in election observation activities.

To sum up then, our Organization's maturity is by now such that Andorra is ready to join the consensus that the OSCE should be endowed with legal personality and the relevant privileges and immunities.

As far as religion and other human values are concerned, we take a very positive view of the Toledo Guiding Principles on Teaching about Religions and Beliefs in Public Schools presented at the Ministerial Council meeting. They constitute an important instrument for the development of educational policies and strategies propagating tolerance and non-discrimination in such a way that younger generations will know, value and respect diversity. Inter-ethnic and interreligious dialogue is an important factor for the social stability and cohesion needed to guarantee mutual respect and facilitate integration.

For these reasons, we welcome the Spanish initiative to establish the first forum of the Alliance of Civilizations, which is to take place next January here in Madrid and is intended to mark an important stage of our move towards a culture of peace and dialogue as the fundamental features required for the fight against international terrorism and for the creation of understanding between the Arab and Muslim world and the West.

The world in which we live has aspects which seem intolerable for human beings in the twenty-first century. It is our duty to fight vigorously against trafficking in human beings. This struggle affects all countries — countries of origin, transit and destination. This trafficking, which is a blatant violation of human rights, is perpetrated by those associated with organized crime and entails pernicious effects for the economy. Respect for the dignity of human beings is an obligation for us all, and, this being so, we shall put forward our best efforts and make available financial resources for the Code of Conduct project which is designed to prevent sexual exploitation of children in connection with tourism and other similar activities.

Terrorism is an evil which unfortunately spares no type of society. We are all exposed to it, and in this sense Andorra will make every effort to combat terrorism in defence of human rights and fundamental liberties. As a regional organization the OSCE can contribute added value to the work of the United Nations in the fight against terrorism and against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, thereby preventing them from falling into the hands of terrorists.

In keeping with our firm desire to unite international efforts aimed at reducing the proliferation of small arms and light weapons as well as conventional ammunition in the Central Asian region, avoiding illicit trafficking in such weapons and ammunition and reducing the residual danger which they represent for the environment, Andorra has taken

part in the “Programme for the destruction of stockpiles of conventional ammunition” in Tajikistan which was launched a few months ago.

There is a connection between peace and security in Europe and the rest of the world. We take note of the request for assistance submitted by Afghanistan and feel it would be a good idea to consider how the OSCE might best offer to Afghanistan its experience in border management and control, police training and the battle against illicit drug trafficking.

Climate change is a phenomenon that has been scientifically demonstrated. There exists a connection between security and the environment and the OSCE could join in the efforts of the international community in this area. Degradation and contamination of soil and of the air and poor management of water resources are leading to negative consequences for the lives of people and for our ecosystems. An unhealthy environment results in physical damage and, in the social and economic sphere, losses which are difficult to remedy. For this reason, a comprehensive policy aimed at protecting the natural environment and harmonizing economic activities is indispensable for the well-being and progress of society.

In concluding my statement, I should like once more to thank Spain for the valuable work accomplished in the course of this year, especially with regard to transparency and guarantees of equality for all participating States. I also want to extend my best wishes to Finland, the country which will now be taking over the role of Chairman-in-Office.