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**LETTER FROM THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE
OPEN SKIES CONSULTATIVE COMMISSION TO THE
MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF BELGIUM,
CHAIRPERSON OF THE FOURTEENTH MEETING
OF THE OSCE MINISTERIAL COUNCIL**

Your Excellency,

In my capacity as Chairperson of the Open Skies Consultative Commission (OSCC), I have the honor, on behalf of the Chairmanships of Slovakia, Slovenia and Sweden, to inform you of the activities of the OSCC in 2006.

During the reporting period, following the Ministerial Council meeting in Ljubljana, the OSCC focused on current issues essential to the effective implementation of the Treaty on Open Skies, in the framework of the continuing implementation of the Treaty during the second phase of its implementation, which started on 1 January 2006.

The overall number of States Parties to the Treaty has reached 34. In 2006 no new applications for accession to the Treaty have as yet been registered. The Chair encourages and welcomes more OSCE participating States to join the Treaty. The application of Cyprus remains on the agenda of the OSCC.

Since the previous reporting period, the States Parties have conducted about 115 observation flights that by and large have been judged successful and have been conducted in an atmosphere of mutual co-operation between the observing and the observed parties. In the course of these observation flights, the States Parties made wide use of such forms of co-operation as shared observation flights, in which two or more observing parties participated in an observation mission over the observed party. Furthermore, the States Parties continued the practice of conducting training observation flights on a bilateral basis.

The OSCC continues to address issues related to the day-to-day implementation of the Treaty through the Informal Working Group on Rules and Procedures (IWGRP). In this context, the OSCC adopted a decision on procedures for counting quotas and the allocation of costs in cases where the observation aircraft is provided by the observing State Party and the observation flight does not commence. The working Group also made positive progress in discussions of the Observation of any point on the entire territory of a State Party and the

influence of hazardous airspace which was reflected in statements to the OSCC Plenary. Furthermore, the OSCC adopted a decision on the revision of the OSCC scales of distribution for 2005–2007 due to the revision of the OSCE Standard Scale of Contributions for 2005-2007.

The Informal Working Group on Sensors (IWGS) continues to work on updating the provisions of two sensor decisions that were originally written in 1994 and expired in 2005 (at the end of the Provisional Period of the Treaty). In updating these decisions, the IWGS has made great strides in making sensor protocols simple and cost-effective. Furthermore, the IWGS has participated in multiple flight-test events where new sensor protocols were developed and the effectiveness of these protocols was validated. Additionally, the IWGS has started the work on a new Certification Decision, with the aim of clarifying and establishing common certification protocols used for certifying multiple sensor types. The work within the IWGS aims at making the sensor procedures effective, up-to-date, and relevant within the spirit of the Treaty.

The OSCC agreed on a Chair's statement on the evolution of active quotas distribution procedure for the year of 2007. An expert meeting was held on the 5 and 6 October, where agreement on the distribution of quotas for 2007 was reached. The meeting and the new procedure were regarded as very successful and in accordance with the Spirit of the Treaty. The Chair is hopeful that this vital instrument of co-operation will continue to function effectively. The OSCC adopted a decision on distribution of active quotas for observation flights in the year 2007.

The Open Skies Treaty continues to enhance openness and transparency among the States Parties and contributes to maintaining a climate of co-operation on their territories, from Vancouver to Vladivostok. Moreover, the Treaty is making a substantial contribution to achieving the goals and objectives of the OSCE, in particular to that of promoting confidence, stability and security in Europe.

Your Excellency, you may deem it useful to reflect this information in the relevant documents of the Ministerial Council meeting.