



**LIETUVOS RESPUBLIKOS NUOLATINĖ ATSTOVYBĖ
PRIE TARPTAUTINIŲ ORGANIZACIJŲ VIENOJE**

**PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF LITHUANIA
TO THE INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS IN VIENNA**

**Statement by the Delegation of the Republic of Lithuania on the preparations
for the Helsinki Ministerial Council Meeting, at the 740th (reinforced) meeting
of the Permanent Council**

14 November 2008

Thank you, Mr. Chairman,

I would like to use this opportunity to express my delegation's appreciation of the relentless efforts by the Chairmanship in skillfully leading us all to Helsinki.

Aligning with the Statement delivered by the distinguished representative of France on behalf of the European Union, permit me to make a few comments in my national capacity.

Firstly, we would like to thank the Chairmanship (Ambassador Harkonen) for their proposed elements for the Helsinki Ministerial Political declaration. Yes, we need to renew the spirit of Helsinki, we need to reaffirm all our OSCE principles, commitments and decisions. But what we need most -- is the political will to uphold these principles, to fulfill commitments and to implement decisions.

The course of events of this year convincingly demonstrated that the OSCE with its instruments of early warning and conflict prevention, and not the least, with our commitments across all three dimensions, continues to be more than relevant. Swift and courageous actions undertaken by Finish Chairmanship in reaction to conflict in Georgia gave us an example of true leadership which we should applaud and follow. At the same time, notwithstanding this leadership, today we all witness how difficult it is to cope with situation after the outbreak of the conflict between the two participating states when, in violation of the fundamental principles of our organization, disproportionate military action was chosen over diplomacy to resolve the conflict.

In this regard, the OSCE missions, including the one in Georgia, play crucial role. They are the ears and eyes enabling the OSCE to perform its functions more efficiently. It is our strong believe, that it is in our interests to do all what is necessary to support the OSCE mission in Georgia to make sure it can conduct its efficient and unimpeded work throughout the entire territory of Georgia. (If needed our ministers should reconfirm their commitment to continued operations of the mission at Helsinki.)

Mr. Chairman,

Unresolved conflicts present a real threat to our common security, therefore we believe that Helsinki is a right place where re-invigorated efforts to resolve protracted conflicts could be given a new and sincere impetus by all our ministers. We are of the opinion that the Ministerial Lunch could provide for a valuable opportunity to have an open and frank exchange of views:

Based on our common values, what are the ways to settle protracted regional conflicts by making full use of the existing OSCE instruments in coordination with other organizations, and by substantiating these efforts with real political will and actions on the ground?

It seems to us – the latter a pressing question we have to address in Helsinki. This could then be a good background that could lead us to further discussions -- within existing security structures -- on the future European Security.

Mr. Chairman,

Our commitments in human dimension are at the heart of this Organization. Strong Ministerial Declaration on Human Rights to Mark the 60th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights would reconfirm in full OSCE commitments in this regard as well as reiterate obligation of each and every participating state to respect human rights and dignity of its citizens. OSCE can substantially contribute to the consolidation of human rights, democracy and rule of law. Therefore, we support the initiative by sponsoring countries to introduce the draft Ministerial decision on Further strengthening the rule of law in the OSCE area.

Mr. Chairman,

The week in which OSCE Ministerial Council will meet is rich with other important high level gatherings and they also relate to Helsinki. As we heard, in Oslo, a solemn signing ceremony of the new Cluster Munitions Convention will be held. We believe that the principles and obligations of international humanitarian law should receive a greater prominence also in the OSCE pol-mil dimension.

In this context, I would like strongly support the statement by the distinguished representative of Netherlands. We urge all participating States to fully observe their obligations in respect to international humanitarian law.

Finally, Mr. Chairman,

As Lithuania is looking forward to take on the OSCE Chairmanship in the year 2011 we appreciate initiative of Finnish Chairmanship on the engagement of the participating States holding the OSCE Chairmanship in the years up 2011. This informal cooperation of 5 successive Chairmanships contributes to the strengthening of continuity, effectiveness and longer-term planning of OSCE activities.

Mr. Chairman,

My country is ready to continue working hard together with other participating states under the leadership of the Chairman in Office to achieve success at the Ministerial Meeting in Helsinki, and beyond.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.