



PERMANENT MISSION OF THE HOLY SEE
TO THE ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY
AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE

**STATEMENT BY MONSIGNOR MICHAEL W. BANACH,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE HOLY SEE,
AT THE 780th (SPECIAL) MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

6 NOVEMBER 2009

**RE: ADDRESS BY THE ALTERNATE MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS
OF GREECE AND SPECIAL ENVOY OF THE CHAIRMAN-IN-OFFICE,
H.E. DIMITRIS P. DROUTSAS**

Madame Chair:

1. The Holy See joins other Delegations in welcoming H.E. Mr. Dimitris P. Droutsas to the Permanent Council and in congratulating him on the assumption of his duties as Special Envoy of the Chairman-in-Office of the OSCE. My Delegation has followed attentively his address this afternoon, as well as the video address last week by H.E. Mr. George Papandreou, Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Greece.

2. Greek culture has been a vital element in the shaping of European society down to our own days, and today Greece has a vital role to play in the process of integration now taking place in Europe. In the international arena, Greece's efforts to promote peace and reconciliation are noteworthy. She can quell tensions and dispel the clouds of suspicion which have long stood in the way of a fully harmonious coexistence in the region and this has helped to foster a spirit of goodwill between individuals and nations – a spirit capable of inspiring, bringing to fulfilment the Greek ideal of the *cosmopolis* in a world which is truly united and imbued with justice and fraternity.

3. It is precisely this spirit that led to putting into motion the Corfu Process and a reflection on questions pertaining to Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian security in the twenty-first century. The Holy See appreciates the opportunity

given to treat in a systematic way the emergence of many threats in the OSCE and the erosion of confidence among participating States. There are the questions of elections and problematic issues with evident geo-political consequences and significant repercussions on security and democratisation. The situation in some areas, the new challenges to the military equilibrium and to the agreements concluded in the OSCE in this regard, require continued dialogue and cooperation. However, persistent threats and unresolved conflicts, together with emerging new threats such as energy security and threats of terrorism are testimony to the fact that, as the Minister has observed, unfortunately, stability and peace are still goals to be achieved.

Forgotten wars and protracted hostilities continue to cause deaths and injuries, often amid silence and neglect on the part of considerable sectors of public opinion. Protracted or frozen conflicts only lead to protracted suffering on the part of civilians, especially when conflict is prolonged with economic sanctions. In the opinion of the Holy See, the OSCE is well placed to invite the protagonists of these conflicts to engage in dialogue, to follow the path of negotiation, and to weigh the proportions between the remedies aimed at eliminating a wrong and the negative humanitarian consequences.

4. Contained in the *acquis* that the OSCE has carved out for itself over the years are impressive commitments in favour of the defense of fundamental freedoms and human rights, the right to integral human development, and support for international law and global institutions. In this, the authors of the Helsinki Final Act were prophetic: they clearly realized that peace would be very precarious without cooperation between nations and between individuals, without a better quality of life, and without the promotion of the values which Europeans hold in common. This is why, among the ten principles, the seventh speaks of “*respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the freedom of thought, conscience, religion or belief*”. The future contribution of the OSCE to shaping the European security architecture will do well to dedicate space also to a discussion of religious freedom, for there is a growing realization that believers constitute a powerful factor in favour of the common good. As a corollary, hatred and fanaticism can find no justification among believers.

5. Minister Droutsas: I offer you best wishes for the success of your mission as you help captain our ship that is “sailing to Athens.”. The Holy See is convinced of the validity of the ideal embodied in Helsinki thirty-five years ago. When “the rosy red fingers of dawn” spread over the skies in Athens, we are confident that all of us, thanks to the Corfu Process, will rediscover the great hope offered by the Helsinki Final Act.

Thank you, Madame Chair_