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**STATEMENT BY H.E. MR. NABİ ŞENSOY
DEPUTY UNDERSECRETARY OF THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS
OF THE REPUBLIC OF TURKEY
AT THE 12TH MEETING OF THE OSCE MINISTERIAL COUNCIL**

Sofia, 6 December 2004

Mr. Chairman,

Foreign Minister Abdullah Gül has asked me to convey his best wishes to his fellow colleagues present here today, and for the success of the OSCE Sofia Ministerial Council, which concludes a year of hard work under Minister Passy's able chairmanship.

The momentous changes in the European security landscape over the past decade have increased the value and relevance of the OSCE. The multidimensional new challenges, risks and threats to our security in the 21st Century defy uni-dimensional approaches. For Turkey, the OSCE continues to be the only forum for regular Pan-European security dialogue.

OSCE Ministerial Council meetings provide us with a valuable opportunity collectively to take stock of our achievements and also of our shortcomings over the course of the past year. The multi-dimensional work carried out at the OSCE throughout 2004 and our decisions here are our achievements. The uneven implementation of commitments across the OSCE geography and the long standing unresolved conflicts must be noted as unsatisfactory elements in our annual track record. In our overall assessment of the developments in the OSCE area we align ourselves with the statement, which you made Mr. Chairman on behalf of the European Union.

The barbaric acts of terror in New York, Istanbul and Madrid as well as the tragedy and horror of Beslan are still nightmares in our hearts and minds. As the representative of a country where terrorism has claimed over 35.000 innocent lives, I wish to express my satisfaction with the degree of solidarity displayed at the OSCE in fighting against this scourge.

With over 3,5 million of our countrymen residing today in Europe, and the ever growing number of European citizens choosing Turkey as their second residence, inter-cultural and inter-religious dialogue, tolerance and non-discrimination have become issues even more dear to us. We support the initiative of the Chairman in Office to appoint personal representatives to address the different forms of discrimination.

Mr. Chairman,

Broadening the spirit and understanding of the OSCE's unique acquis to neighbouring geographies remains high on our agenda. We wish to commend the excellent report on the implementation of PC Decision 571 containing a wealth of practical ideas and suggestions which will guide us to deepen our interaction with our Partners for Cooperation. A concrete example of beneficial interaction with our Partners is our election assistance to Afghanistan. This is "outreach" par excellence. The OSCE must stand ready to share its depth of knowledge, experience and implementation capacity in elections in other adjacent areas, should there be similar requests.

I would also like to pay a special tribute to the work carried out at the OSCE towards combating trafficking in human beings, including trafficking in children. It is more than desirable that comparable attention is paid at the OSCE to the smuggling of migrants.

Mr. Chairman,

I would like to commend the people of Ukraine for their perseverance in expressing their will through peaceful democratic means. We welcome that developments in our close neighbour and partner have taken a more propitious course thanks also to the strength of its democratic institutions. We believe that the OSCE must continue to play a prominent role in ensuring that the will of the Ukrainian people will prevail. We reaffirm our commitment to the preservation of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Mr. Chairman,

Let me register once more our concerns regarding unresolved conflicts in our neighbourhood. We regret that the talks held in Varna between the Moldovan sides with the participation of the mediators did not go far enough in generating the necessary political will to engage in a meaningful dialogue.

We equally regret that the conflicts centering around Abkhazia and South Ossetia in Georgia have not yet been resolved. Worse still the situation has deteriorated as a result of recent developments in both these regions. We wish to reiterate our support for the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political unity of Georgia, which represent the vital parameters within which these issues should continue to be addressed.

The Nagorno-Karabakh conflict similarly remains unresolved constituting an obstacle to regional peace, stability and cooperation. Moreover, the immense sufferings of a huge number of internally displaced persons continue. As a neighbouring country and as a member of the Minsk Group, Turkey has particular interest in finding a peaceful solution to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, based on the norms and principles of international law, in particular the inviolability of borders.

Mr. Chairman,

I cannot conclude without mentioning the importance Turkey attaches to the CFE treaty as one of the main pillars of the European security architecture. We reaffirm our commitment to the early entry into force of the Adapted Treaty, pending the remaining fulfillment of Istanbul commitments on Georgia and Moldova.

Finally, on the reform process, we support the establishment of a panel of eminent persons tasked with conducting an in-depth review of the Organization. We look forward to studying the suggestions at an assessment conference whose recommendations can then be presented to this august body for political guidance.

Mr. Chairman, I wish once again to thank the Bulgarian Chairmanship for its tireless efforts on behalf of all of us, and to express confidence in the success of Slovenia as the incoming chair who can count on our full support and cooperation next year.