

Sixteenth OSCE Ministerial Council Meeting
Helsinki, December 4-5, 2008

ENGLISH only

Statement by Mr. Urmas Paet, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Estonia

Mr. Chairman, Ministers, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am very pleased to attend this meeting here in Helsinki, where the Helsinki Final Act was agreed and adopted. Although the world has tremendously changed since its adoption, the main **principles** contained in the Final Act are today as universal, relevant and encompassing as they were at that time. Sovereignty and territorial integrity of states, inviolability of frontiers, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, peaceful settlement of disputes and the right to belong or not to belong to international organizations or treaties are principles that cannot be questioned. Our strength lies in consistent commitment to this *aquis*. We have to more effectively use the means that already are at the OSCE's disposal, rather than invent something new.

In order to strengthen the OSCE's legal framework, we support the speedy adoption of the **Convention** on International Legal Personality, Legal Capacity and Privileges and Immunities of the OSCE. This will help to overcome many practical problems of the Organization.

Mr. Chairman,

Despite significant progress in many areas of co-operation, there are still security issues that need our close attention.

At our last meeting we talked about the necessity of increasing the presence of the OSCE military monitors in South Ossetia, **Georgia**. Now, after the August conflict, we regrettably face the situation where the OSCE military monitors are denied access to South-Ossetia. We are concerned about the large number of internally displaced persons and refugees. Full and unimpeded access of international aid organisations to the conflict areas must be granted. We call upon all parties of the conflict to fulfil their commitments undertaken in August and September agreements. In this context I would like to re-emphasise the importance of respecting sovereignty and territorial integrity of Georgia. I would also like to stress that the unwanted foreign military presence on territories of other sovereign states is a fundamental obstacle to peace and stability.

We have to continue our efforts to find long-term solutions not only in Georgia, but also in **Transnistria** and in **Nagorno-Karabakh**.

A year ago in Madrid, we approved a decision on the OSCE engagement with **Afghanistan**. Although we have had notable success in Afghan anti-drug police training project, at the same time progress is needed on projects that are aimed to increase Afghan domestic security. Developing stability and democracy in Afghanistan is our common concern.

Increasing **cyber security** is one of the new challenges that face us today. For this reason, the cyber security had a prominent place in Estonia's chairmanship programme in Forum for Security Co-operation and we are determined to continue the work on this issue. I am pleased to note that compared to last year, the number of states that have signed or ratified the Council of Europe's Cybercrime Convention has increased. We call upon all states who are not parties to the convention to consider the possibility of acceding to this convention.

Mr. Chairman,

Estonia highly appreciates the work of the OSCE in the area of **human rights**. In this respect the role of the ODIHR in organizing the election monitoring cannot be overestimated. It is essential that states co-operate with the ODIHR prior, during and after the elections, and they give thorough consideration to its recommendations. We would like to see more political will and spirit of cooperation in this regard.

The OSCE has acquired a vital role in **strengthening civil society**, including engaging actively with the NGO's. Broad and unrestricted NGO participation is the prerequisite for the success of the annual Human Dimension Implementation Meeting in Warsaw. I also applaud the Civil Society Forum, which took place here in Helsinki earlier this week. These are good examples on how involving the society at large helps to achieve in practice the goals of the OSCE.

In conclusion, I would like to sincerely thank and commend Foreign Minister Alexander Stubb and former Foreign Minister Ilkka Kanerva and the entire Finnish team for their effective and successful chairmanship during this challenging time. I would like to wish Greece every success in the coming year in their chairmanship.