

**STATEMENT BY MR. STEPHAN VANACKERE,
FEDERAL MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE
KINGDOM OF BELGIUM, AT THE SEVENTEENTH MEETING OF
THE OSCE MINISTERIAL COUNCIL**

Athens, 2 December 2009

Mr. Chairman,
Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen,

I should like first of all to express my regret that my minister is unable to attend the meeting today.

On his behalf, I welcome the agreement reached this morning on the draft decision and declaration on the Corfu Process, which will give new ministerial impetus to the intensive, interactive and dynamic dialogue on the future of security in Europe that has developed at the OSCE in 2009 following the political green light given to it at the Ministerial Council meeting in Helsinki in December 2008 and the informal meeting in Corfu in June 2009.

This dialogue has already made it possible to examine in depth the causes of the security malfunctions of the last few years and to outline initial elements of possible responses to them.

Thus, we have agreed to forge ahead and make full use again of the OSCE's assets, in terms both of its shared principles and commitments and of the conflict prevention and crisis management mechanisms and tools in the security, economic and environmental, and human dimensions.

The armed conflict in Georgia in August 2008 once again demonstrated that peace can be fragile. We must ensure that a conflict of this sort does not reoccur. We must also ensure that agreement is reached on solutions to the unresolved regional conflicts in the OSCE area.

The solutions are known; all that is needed is the political will to implement them. It is high time to make the corresponding decisions.

The relaunch of the regime envisaged in the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE Treaty) would also send out a strong signal as to our real willingness to co-operate.

I welcome this intensive dialogue as well because we have also confirmed our willingness today to look together towards the future and to pool our resources to confront the threats and challenges facing all of our States and citizens. We have agreed to strengthen security in Europe and in this way to restore the confidence and accord required to respond effectively to the concerns of each one of us and to the security threats that we face.

It is vital to reaffirm our shared commitment to the principles of the Helsinki Final Document and the Charter of Paris. It is also essential to vigorously confirm our commitment to the respect of human rights, democracy and the rule of law. In our eyes these are indispensable elements of security.

The responses to these threats to security are interdimensional by nature. Let me take the example of terrorism. All of the dimensions – military, security in the widest sense, economic and human – are involved, even if one or other of them might be more important in a particular context. Thus combating terrorism has an important military dimension in Afghanistan, whereas in Belgium the human, economic, financial, legal or cultural dimensions predominate. A multidimensional approach is therefore indispensable, and effective responses must be made by all of us and should include all domains and security dimensions.

The economic dimension in itself also plays an essential role in the security of the European continent. The European Union (EU) is the living proof of this. Coal and steel enabled the Member States of the EU to construct a solid basis for co-operation, which has helped to increase confidence among them and has permitted the EU Member States to live in peace for nearly 65 years.

The entry into force yesterday of the Treaty of Lisbon will give even greater weight to the European Union and to its common foreign and security policy, particularly at the OSCE. I hope that this will help to increase the effectiveness of the Corfu Process.

As a pan-European – both Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian – forum, the OSCE plays a key role in this strategic dialogue on the future of security in Europe. Its exhaustive geographical representativeness and its comprehensive approach to security give it a central role in the Corfu Process, which it should pursue.

This process should also make use of contributions from other international organizations concerned with security in Europe, in particular NATO.

We should definitively abandon a bloc-to-bloc approach and promote effective multilateralism so as to be able to face up to the increasingly complex challenges of the twenty-first century.

Only under these conditions will the Corfu Process on European security dialogue produce concrete results that will strengthen security in Europe, which is our common goal.

Belgium is open to the possibility of an OSCE summit in 2010, which should help to strengthen the Corfu Process and the OSCE.

I should like in conclusion to warmly thank the Greek Chairmanship for the valuable work it has accomplished, which strengthens the OSCE and makes a vital contribution to security in Europe.

I should also like to express my best wishes to the future OSCE Chairmanship by Kazakhstan in 2010. It will play an essential role in consolidating the progress made this year in European security dialogue and increasing the effectiveness of the OSCE. I am sure that it will not spare any effort in achieving these aims.

Thank you.