



**Statement by Ambassador Barbara Gibson  
Delegation of Canada  
in Response to the  
Slovenian Foreign Minister Dimitrij Rupel  
540<sup>th</sup> Plenary Permanent Council  
January 13, 2005**

Mr. Chairman,

It is a pleasure for Canada to welcome the new Chairman in Office, His Excellency, Foreign Minister Rupel, to the Permanent Council on the occasion of its first meeting under the Slovenian Chairmanship. We look forward to taking on this year's upcoming challenges with renewed vigour in full cooperation with you and your team. We appreciate the very detailed description of Slovenian proposals for the coming year, outlining your plans for the implementation of the wide variety of decisions taken at the Sofia Ministerial Council.

We would like to take this opportunity to express our great appreciation to the outgoing Bulgarian Chairmanship, and especially to Ambassador Petrov and his team, for their tireless work over the past year in advancing the work of the Organisation. We look forward to working with Bulgaria again, side by side, in the coming year.

Canada deeply regrets the failure thus far to adopt new Scales of Contribution and the 2005 Unified Budget, especially in light of overwhelming support for the Bulgarian Chair's "Best Guess". The absence of such decisions is already having negative consequences on the OSCE's work, as well as its reputation. Canada, therefore, welcomes the commitment of the new Slovenian Chairmanship to address this unfortunate and unnecessary situation as one of its first priorities. Canada calls on all participating States to work constructively with the Chairmanship and other delegations to find a very early solution to this impasse.

We would like to reiterate Canada's full support for the shared values and common principles to which our governments subscribed when becoming participating States in the OSCE. Canada believes that the OSCE has a strong role to play in ensuring an integrated and comprehensive approach to security and stability in Europe. We also believe that the OSCE's international reputation is built on its unique strengths in a wide range of areas. These strengths include elections monitoring and the work of field missions, which cover topics as diverse as the rule of law, policing, civilian-military relations, environmental protections, economic development, democratization and human rights.

Elections are the cornerstone of democracy, and the OSCE has carved out a unique role and expertise in this field. This has been illustrated many times over by the outstanding work of ODIHR. We should be proud of the very constructive role played most recently by the OSCE in Ukraine, and in Afghanistan, where the OSCE has found a creative and effective way to support elections in this particular context. We see this as a useful model to build on for the future. The growth of OSCE election activities in 2004 inspired some discussion in the Permanent Council and we believe further discussions could be a constructive approach.

The OSCE has also recently devoted much effort to combating intolerance and hatred and promoting non-discrimination. Canada considers these efforts central to security and stability in Europe. We strongly support the integrated approach that the OSCE, and in particular ODIHR, has taken to these issues.

After an extremely trying year replete with terrorist acts which have deeply distressed the international community as a whole, Canada continues to see great value in the activities of the organisation in combating terrorism and in sharing experiences in countering terrorism. Steps to promote good governance, democracy, the rule of law and respect for human rights are equally important tools in the struggle against terrorism and the assurance of long-term stability and peace.

The politico-military dimension of the OSCE offers great opportunities for cooperation among participating States towards our shared security; for example, as it relates to the implementation of the documents on SALW and on Stockpiles of Conventional Ammunition. We see the transition to the Adapted CFE and completion of the Istanbul process as an important step to achieve peace and stability in Georgia and Moldova. The upcoming Open Skies Review Conference reminds us of the gains for regional stability that the OSCE has already made, thanks to its confidence-building verification mechanisms.

We welcome Minister Rupel's proposals to take pragmatic and targeted steps to contribute to the resolution of frozen conflicts. In this respect, we are profoundly disappointed that no consensus has been found as yet to renew the mandate of the BMO in Georgia, in particular given the specific request of the interested state to have international assistance for border management and security. We also support Slovenia's proposals regarding work on the Border Concept.

Canada remains committed to the further improvement of the effectiveness and efficiency of the Economic Forum. We welcome this year's theme which relates to migration and integration, and we look forward to addressing the economic and environmental impact of these issues.

Please be assured that the Slovenian Chairman in Office will have Canada's full cooperation and support in addressing the many challenges ahead. In particular, we will closely collaborate with you in your efforts to improve the efficiency of the OSCE. We

will support you as you put in place the Panel of Eminent Persons to assist in our reflection on the role of the Organisation. We also agree that it is crucial for participating States to reach an early decision on the appointment of a new Secretary General.

Our two countries have worked closely together on many cross-cutting issues in the context of the Human Security Network, on issues such as landmines and the Responsibility to Protect. We know that Minister Rupel is well acquainted with our country given his past association with Canada. It is with great pleasure that we pledge to pursue our excellent cooperation with Slovenia in the year ahead under Minister Rupel's leadership.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.