

**STATEMENT**  
**by H.E. Mr. Sergei Martynov, Minister of Foreign Affairs**  
**of the Republic of Belarus at the OSCE Ministerial Council Meeting**  
**(Sofia, 6 December 2004)**

Mr. President,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

The OSCE was established nearly 30 years ago as a forum for an equitable political dialogue and cooperation for security. On the eve of the forthcoming Organization's anniversary it is especially appropriate to ask ourselves how much the today's OSCE meets the real needs of all its Member States and in what direction it should be developing.

The OSCE's contribution to the formation of the system for comprehensive security in Europe is immense, obvious and unarguable. It is, though, equally obvious and unarguable that the Organization has been in an ever growing deep structural and conceptual crisis.

Exacerbation of political situation in Kosovo early this year was one of the many examples of our Organization's repeated failure to neither predict the escalation of violence nor play even a minor role in the prevention and relief of tension.

There is an impression that the OSCE is unable and does not care to get rid of its image of a dependent *subject* of international politics that has been strongly associated with the Organization over the recent times. Essentially, the OSCE has been turned into a meek, amorphous structure whose role has been reduced to "taking care" of political decisions already made by other institutes. And this has nothing to do with the so-called "flexibility" of the OSCE.

What happened to the OSCE's once leading role in preventive diplomacy in the region? Peacekeeping and prevention are being taken over by other organizations and structures. Similarly, the OSCE mechanisms set up for crisis settlement, unblocking of "frozen conflicts" and post-conflict rehabilitation do not work.

Rectifying geographic imbalances in the OSCE's activities still remains a pressing problem.

This year, decades after the establishment of our Organization, we for the first time had tentative signs of dialogue in the Permanent Council on the situation with electoral processes in the so-called "mature democracies". Even this limited discussion was sufficient enough to discover numerous failures in the electoral systems of those countries. The electoral campaigns that took place this year in many OSCE Member States confirmed that no country is immune from criticism. By the way, who and where happened to divide OSCE Member States into the so-called "mature" and, analogizing, what might have been implied, "adolescent" democracies? To the best of my

knowledge, that division was not made in our Organization. It became clear that the OSCE ODIHR's methodology in the area of election observation was not perfect, and that there was lack of transparency in the ODIHR's work.

In our opinion, the outcome of the ODIHR's recent elections observation in a number of countries has revealed a rather risky trend. That was that ODIHR's findings were no longer just technical recommendations to improve electoral processes. They had been made instruments for political pressure, resorted to on the basis of obvious double standards. Some countries began to use ODIHR reports as justification for all sorts of sanctions once the outcome of elections happens to be not what they expected. What kind of cooperation can one possibly talk about here? Consequently, the ODIHR is being transformed from the institution for assistance in democratization into a destabilizing factor for societies. It appeared that the development of unified and objective criteria to assess democratic nature of elections and improve the ODIHR's methods of work would have changed the present situation. And we proposed a draft decision to that end. Much to our surprise, it was rejected by the same countries that take so much pleasure in teaching others on how to run elections.

Instead, we keep being engaged in endless rhetoric on the "exceptional value of field presences and missions as unique OSCE instruments"

We cannot possibly avoid the question as to under what conditions our Organization should normally decide on the opening of field presences. It is also imperative for us to think over the missions' cost to the OSCE, as well as their efficiency against the resources spent on them. Is it worthwhile, for example, to spend a million EURO on a mission to ultimately realize projects amounting to some tens of thousand EUROS? Yet, the missions take up nearly 80 % of the total OSCE budget.

It is really high time to have a full-fledged "inventory" of the missions, a special meeting that would review the aspects of the OSCE field activities in their entirety and decide on where continuation of an OSCE presence is really a necessity, or whether it should be abandoned for some other form of cooperation. The package of proposals on reforming field missions that we presented last year is still on the table.

All that is a convincing proof that the instruments at the OSCE's disposal, as established in the Organization's basic documents, have not just gone seriously blunt. They are simply not up to the today's challenges. The OSCE continues to remain in a deep systemic, functional and, if you like, ideological crisis. It has so far failed to adapt itself to the realities of the modern world.

This is exactly why Belarus considers the OSCE reform as the major issue on the OSCE agenda and that of our today's meeting. This was the very rationale behind our acceding to the joint

statements on the necessity of the OSCE comprehensive reform adopted this year by the CIS Member States in Moscow and Astana.

We do not believe that an invitation to a straightforward dialogue on the OSCE working methods can possibly lead to its dissolution. On the contrary, reluctance to acknowledge the existing problems, abstention from seeking response to real challenges to our common security is far more detrimental to our Organization.

In this regard, we see as extremely dangerous the attempts to produce an illusion of reform, formulate some "alternative agenda, a new niche of its own" for the OSCE through adoption of essentially partitive decisions. Besides, such decisions often duplicate functions of other international structures and do nothing but "disperse" the Organization's material, human and financial resources.

We are convinced that the OSCE has no need to look for any "niche" whatsoever. The Organization already has its unique identity and role. This role should only be redefined, adapting the OSCE to the present international realities, namely through adoption of clear Rules of Procedure of the OSCE, transformation of its standing political organs into truly efficient instruments for preparation and making decisions on genuinely pressing problems of ensuring our common security, fixing the activities of field missions, restructuring of the Secretariat.

So far the far-fetched search for the so-called "new niche" for the OSCE has only resulted in the Organization's continuing overlooking of fundamental processes defining "the face", level of security across the area stretching from Vancouver to Vladivostok. Meanwhile, the misbalance between the three OSCE dimensions is only getting worse, accompanied by useless declarations of their equal value.

There has been no serious progress in the implementation of the strategies adopted at the Ministerial Council in Maastricht, namely the one to combat challenges and threats, as well as in the area of economic and environmental dimension.

The Republic of Belarus has made its own contribution to increased effectiveness of the OSCE Economic Forum by initiating a Ministerial Council draft decision to assist coming into force and implementation of the UN Convention against Corruption.

Belarus strongly supports the adoption of the Declaration on the 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the End of WWII. We believe that this joint declaration must become our Organization's adequate response to the rather alarming and short-sighted statements by individual politicians in some OSCE Member States.

It is really high time to pay a truly serious attention to the OSCE politico-military dimension, including in terms of strengthening of the FSC role.

The CFE Treaty crisis is obvious. Belarus sees no objective reasons for other countries to delay ratifying the Agreement on the Adaptation of the CFE Treaty. The adapted CFE Treaty is too much important, critically important for it to be used as a bargain counter in the geopolitical battle across the NIS area. Continuing refusal to ratify the adapted CFE Treaty under vain pretexts threatens to break-up the balanced system of European security.

Likewise, the 1999 Vienna Document does not, in our opinion, live up to the today's realities. It is critical to set to removing these flaws.

It is also suggested that we start working to review effectiveness in the implementation of other OSCE politico-military documents. This is primarily about the OSCE Document on Small Arms and Light Weapons and guiding Principles in the area of non-proliferation.

The measure of our success in addressing the challenges confronting us today will very much influence the essence of the question that we shall ask ourselves on the Helsinki's 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary: "*What kind of OSCE do we need?*" or "*Do we need OSCE?*"

In conclusion, allow me to address the expressions of appreciation to Bulgaria for its contribution to the OSCE's work and preparation of our today's meeting. I would like to particularly praise Solomon Passy whose professional and personal merits were an important component in the overall success of the Bulgarian Chairmanship. We would also like to wish Slovenia a successful work as the OSCE Chairman-in-Office in 2005.

Thank you for your attention.