



Statement made by H.E. the Foreign Minister of the Republic of Cyprus
Mr. George Iacovou at the 13th Meeting of the OSCE Ministerial Council,
Ljubljana, 5-6 December 2005.

I wish to thank the Government of Slovenia for the warm hospitality we have received and for the excellent organization of this Meeting. Let me also commend you for your successful Chairmanship through your able stewardship of this Office. I also like to thank the Secretary-General for his work and I welcome his reports.

We are gathered here in Ljubljana for the 13th Ministerial Council to reaffirm the continuing relevance of this Organization, We celebrate this year thirty years after the Helsinki Final Act and fifteen years after the Paris Charter. Let us reaffirm the OSCE as a forum for political dialogue, as a promoter of democracy, of human rights and the rule of law and as a primary instrument in conflict resolution.

I pledge our continuing support for OSCE principles and commitments as well as for the organization's comprehensive concept of security and cross-dimensional approach. I need not stress that these commitments apply, indeed must apply, equally and with no exceptions to all Participating States.

In order to meet numerous and evolving challenges in the strategic environment of the 21st century, we must strengthen the OSCE's effectiveness. We should all do our utmost to meet substantially these challenges by the next meeting of the Ministerial Council.

Our institutions and field missions should be further supported. They must be able to carry out their task of assisting participating States in meeting their commitments in all three dimensions. Increased efficiency, transparency and accountability of the organization and its institutions is essential. This should be combined with preserving the institutions autonomy and freedom of action within their mandate.

The number of unresolved conflicts which still persist in the OSCE area continue to threaten the consolidation of peace and stability. To achieve the goal of a permanent and stable peace, we must make sure that the solutions to these conflicts are based on international law and that they enjoy the full support of the people concerned. They must be just and perceived as such by the peoples involved. After all, there can be no viable solutions unless they address the democratic sensitivities of the people they are intended to serve. The respect of human rights and the independence and territorial integrity of states are both integral part of international law as it has evolved today.

As we subscribed to the statement of the Presidency and EU Commission of the EU, I will not refer to specific issues except one. The Treaty of the Open Skies. Cyprus is blocked from joining that Treaty by one member state of our Organisation. We deeply regret that. That state should end this unfortunate practice and stop tutoring us as if we had not been good pupils so far. We can learn faster than one might think.

We live in a vastly changed world from the one in which the OSCE was born. The rapid pace of change which we have witnessed during this time calls for some creative thinking to adapt the Organisation to today's world. We need reform, but it must be a reform which takes into consideration the sensitivities of its participating states. It must be a reform that will respect the delicate balances within the organization and will not diverge from the principles of the OSCE. We should not look for ephemeral solutions. Let us see how we can put the Organisation in a position to tackle the problems of today and to plan how to tackle the challenges of tomorrow

Finally Mr. Chairman, I wish to extend our best wishes to our next Chairman in Office, our colleague from Belgium, Karel de Gucht.
