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786TH PERMANENT COUNCIL

GREEK OSCE CHAIRMANSHIP 2009

FAREWELL REMARKS BY AMBASSADOR MARA MARINAKI

Dear colleagues,

As today is the last meeting of the Permanent Council under the Greek Chairmanship, it is my pleasure and honor to share with you a first account of this year's activities.

We will proceed to this assessment by reminding ourselves what we *aimed at* in the beginning of our Chairmanship and by examining what we *actually undertook and achieved* (or *not achieved*, for that matter). In this respect we should bring to mind two documents: First, the inaugural speech by the then CiO, former Foreign Minister Mrs. Dora Bakoyannis, in this Hall on 15 January, when she outlined the principles that would guide the Greek Chairmanship and its targets. The same principles which were reiterated by the new CiO, Prime Minister Mr. George Papandreou, in his message on 29 October, and by his Special Envoy, Alternate Foreign Minister Mr. Dimitris Droutsas, in the special session of the PC of 6 November. The second document we kindly ask you to bring to mind, is the document we have entitled "*Sailing to Athens*" issued in November, where we described our vision for the prospects of the Athens Ministerial Council.

From the outset, we committed ourselves to be "*honest brokers*" among all participating States, to uphold the principles and values of this Organization and to foster consensus without compromising anyone's comfortable point of consent. Our target has been to engage the OSCE family in a *bona fide* dialogue, in order to restore confidence and trust and reinstate the concept of comprehensive, cooperative and indivisible security, as the cornerstone of our relations and cooperation.

Corfu Process

Looking back, we can all agree that the year evolved around the **Corfu Process**. In the first half, we laid the foundations for the dialogue, which at first did not even have a name! We first had to agree on the existence of an actual *need* for a dialogue; then, we had to define the *content* of this dialogue, the *forum* for its conduct and its *place* in the broader framework of security organization in the OSCE area. The Joint FSC-PC meeting of 18 February, followed by the Winter Meeting of the Parliamentary Assembly, the Round Table of 25 February organized by the French FSC Chairmanship, our first Ambassadors' Retreat of 23-24 April and the Seminar of 8 May organized by the Austrian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, were all pivotal in shaping our thinking and establishing a common understanding. Finally, we had an exceptional Annual Security Review Conference, which served as the final stepping stone for our Ministers' meeting in Corfu in June.

It was a slow, but most rewarding process; 51 Foreign Ministers attended the Corfu Meeting and engaged in an open discussion, recapturing the spirit of cooperation that brought together our predecessors 35 years ago. In Corfu, our Ministers declared the political will to address existing security threats and challenges on the basis of comprehensive and indivisible security.

Our Corfu meetings since September were both exhaustive and *exhausting*, for all of us - not to mention the Chairmanship! - as well as fruitful. In a rather short period of time, we managed to identify the areas we need to focus on, in order to enhance security *in* Europe, to address common challenges of security *of* Europe, and to generate ideas on how we can empower this Organization, so as to better serve our security needs in the 21st century. We have had the opportunity to revisit the milestone documents of this Organization, to appreciate their completeness and how pertinent they still continue to be today, and we looked into ways to improve the implementation of our *acquis*. We also reaffirmed that security *is* comprehensive and that the OSCE's comprehensive approach to security is not only relevant, but is also the Organization's main *niche*.

Having started as an initiative of the Chairmanship, the "Corfu Process" then became the shared pride of the 56 participating States in Athens, the common *legacy* of all of us for the years to come. With the adoption of the relevant Ministerial Declaration and the Decision, our Ministers, for the first time formally and collectively, initiated the Corfu Process and provided us with the guidelines for its continuation in 2010. At the same time, we all have appreciated the positive ramifications of this dialogue in our relations and in the work of the OSCE. A sense of renewed partnership and commonality of purpose changed the quality of our dialogue, enhanced mutual respect and our willingness for compromise. It was thanks to this spirit that the Athens Ministerial Council was a shared success.

Protracted Conflicts

During the last 12 months, we also worked towards the resolution of the **protracted conflicts**, including through the active engagement of the CiO Special Representative, Ambassador Christopoulos, and the OSCE field operations. From the very beginning, we aimed at facilitating result-oriented negotiations, in parallel with concrete steps toward confidence-building and tension reduction. We have been determined to act without concessions neither to our principles, nor to our commitments towards this Organization.

As expected, the **Georgia** case received much of our attention and action. Following the non-renewal of the mandate of the OSCE Mission to Georgia on December 31st of last year, we were faced with a double, complicated and extremely sensitive task: on the one hand, we had to continue negotiations to redefine the OSCE involvement on the ground, in a status-neutral approach, while the Mission to Georgia entered the painful phase of discontinuing its activities. On the other hand, the Chairmanship had to carry on with the activities of the OSCE Military Monitoring Operation, one of the vital components of the implementation of the August 12th and September 8th Agreements of 2008.

Being fully committed to the strengthening of the Organization's role in contributing to the maintenance of a fragile stability in the region, the Chairmanship engaged itself actively, in co-organizing this year's 5 rounds of the Geneva Talks, along with the UN and the EU, and co-facilitating the meetings of the Incident Prevention and Response Mechanisms. Moreover, cautiously, and in a spirit of openness and cooperation with all sides, we have taken concrete initiatives in the humanitarian field, aiming at restoring confidence, facilitating contacts between the sides and thus alleviating hardships in the conflict-affected areas. I wish to remind the Council of the resumption of the flow of gas to Tskhinvali in January, the tangible

undertakings on issues of missing persons and detainees, and the restoration of utilities distribution networks.

We regret the fact that, despite our array of inventive and exhaustive alternatives and possibilities, a consensus-based solution on the issue of the OSCE field presence in Georgia has not been reached so far. Much work remains to be done in order to convince everyone in this Hall, and in our capitals, of the necessity to work beyond a zero-sum approach on this issue, and in favor of a peaceful resolution of the conflict in Georgia; all this according to our common responsibility and respecting our commitments towards each other. Greece reiterates its willingness to work together with all our partners towards a meaningful and sustainable solution. In this regard, we express our support to the incoming Kazakh Chairmanship's efforts to increase the OSCE engagement in all forms [practical, active, visible and balanced] in addressing the situation in the region. The Greek Chairmanship still believes that our status-neutral proposal for the continuation of the OSCE's presence on the ground has the best chances for a consensus.

On the **Nagorno-Karabakh** dispute, the Chairmanship fully supported the intensive efforts of the Minsk Group Co-Chairs, and of its Personal Representative, Ambassador Kasprzyk, to maintain the dynamics demonstrated through six meetings this year between the Presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan. The intensity and increased frequency of contacts between the two leaders has significantly contributed to an enhanced dialogue and toward finalizing the Basic Principles for the Peaceful Settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, which, as repeatedly stated by the CiO, remain the only option for a lasting solution. We commend both the Azeri and Armenian sides for their constructiveness and willingness to work intensively to resolve the remaining issues and to reach an agreement based, in particular, upon the principles of the Helsinki Final Act. We can therefore only wish that confidence in the area improves further, tensions will be further reduced and that incidents, such as the shooting (thankfully without casualties), which occurred two days ago during a Monitoring by the Office of our Representative on the southern part of the Line of Contact (LOC), will not occur in the future.

Despite the adverse conditions in **Moldova** during 2009, due to the prolonged political instability and repeated elections, the Chairmanship, in close cooperation with the OSCE Mission, undertook concrete steps aiming at restoring confidence between the two banks of the Dniester/Nistru river, especially in the field of military and law enforcement cooperation, organizing two successful seminars in Vienna in June and in the security zone in Moldova, in October.

In the meantime, however, we never lost sight of our real goal, that is the resumption of meaningful political negotiations in the "5+2" format, without preconditions and in good faith, to reach a mutually acceptable agreement resolving the conflict, while respecting the territorial integrity and sovereignty of the Republic of Moldova. Thus, in close cooperation with all Mediators and Observers, and especially after the new Moldovan Government was appointed in October, our efforts resulted in the intensification of dialogue between the sides, after a stalemate of more than three years. It is remarkable that, while only one informal meeting of the "5+2" took place in the first 10 months of this year (in June), we have witnessed two such meetings this last month, along with several bilateral meetings between the political representatives of Chisinau and Tiraspol in the negotiation format. Allow me to commend the realistic approach of the new Moldovan authorities towards this end, as well as the willingness of the sides to resolve outstanding problems that have reduced confidence between them.

Three Dimensions

Our Chairmanship had set core priorities across all three Dimensions. With your help, we managed to further discussions in the framework of our priorities and we were gratified to achieve concrete results in Athens. We might have achieved even more, but I believe we can all be fairly satisfied with the results.

We pursued the Organization's work in the field of **non-military security** by focusing on counter-terrorism, border management, policing and combating organised crime. In 2009, we were happy to see the OSCE Border Management Staff College being launched in Dushanbe, offering training to border officers from all participating States and Partners for Cooperation, including Afghanistan, and promoting cross-border cooperation in Central Asia. The seminars and expert-level meetings organised this year covered a wide range of subjects, from the abuse of non-profit organizations to combating terrorism financing, to possible ways of engaging with the media in countering terrorism, hate crimes and effective law-enforcement cooperation and cyber-security.

We noted an increased interest of participating States in further enhancing the OSCE non-military security work; and this was reflected in the adoption of three Ministerial Council decisions in Athens [promoting the international legal framework against terrorism, enhancing the Organization's police-related work and promoting travel document security]. Furthermore, the cross-dimensional Ministerial Decision on transnational threats highlighted our broader interest in intensifying the OSCE work in addressing cyber-threats, threats to energy security, the proliferation of WMD's, terrorism and organized crime, including illicit arms transfers, drug trafficking and trafficking in human beings. The political will for further engagement in these fields was also reflected in the inclusion of cross-dimensional and transnational threats in the priority areas for European Security, discussed in the context of the *Corfu Process*.

The work of the OSCE in the **Economic and Environmental Dimension** has also been particularly important in 2009. Both in number and substance the three Decisions adopted in Athens prove that it rightly holds its place in the comprehensive and indivisible concept of security. The Decisions on "Energy Security", "Migration Management" and "the Future Orientation of the Second Dimension" will define to a large extent the work to be carried out in the future in the framework of this Dimension. We cannot but regret that the Decision on security implications of the climate change could not be adopted, despite our efforts. We hope that the incoming Kazakh Chairmanship will take up the issue and, taking advantage of a more suitable "timing", will prove to be more successful.

With regard to the **2009 Unified Budget**, we tried to accommodate the positions of all participating States, while allowing the effective operational capacity of the Organization, despite the known difficulties that we were facing earlier this year. Furthermore, we were tasked with establishing the OSCE Scales of Contributions by the end of this year, for the period of 2010-2012. Informal discussions on the matter are still ongoing, with the aim to reach consensus, hopefully very soon on this issue.

The Greek Chairmanship also sought to focus attention to all three areas of the **Human Dimension**, namely human rights and fundamental freedoms, the rule of law and democratic institutions, as well as tolerance and non-discrimination. With respect to human rights and fundamental freedoms, we dedicated special attention to freedom of religion or belief, to the rule of law, the latter having also been the subject of the 2009 Human Dimension Seminar, and to freedom of the media. Concerning the latter, as you remember, we had tabled a draft Decision for the Ministerial Council on fostering media freedom and enhancing pluralism, which came very close to being adopted, and should be further pursued in the next year.

Combating hate crimes was a thematic priority aiming at responding to the recent increase of violent manifestations of intolerance across the OSCE area. The improvement of the situation of the Roma and Sinti, and gender equality (more specifically the issue of combating violence against women), were discussed throughout the year in dedicated meetings, culminating with the adoption, by the Ministerial Council of Athens, of several decisions following proposals of our Chairmanship.

In the area of tolerance and non-discrimination, the Greek Chairmanship has appointed three new Personal Representatives, who reported to the Permanent Council and also undertook for the first time a joint country visit twice already this year. Also, the Decision on holding an OSCE High Level Conference on tolerance and non-discrimination in 2010, taken by the Athens Ministerial Council, gave further impetus to this particular area of the Human Dimension.

We also paid particular attention to election-related issues, including election observation. We started by addressing issues related to the effective cooperation of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly and the ODIHR in the field, and we were pleased to assess that indeed significant progress was marked this year. The Chairmanship also organized an expert seminar on electoral management bodies and brokered a Permanent Council Decision to send an OSCE Election Support Team to Afghanistan.

Dear colleagues,

We also had a duty to assist this Organization improve its efficiency. In this framework, we decided to concentrate our efforts on further pursuing dialogue for strengthening the OSCE's **legal framework**. We assumed this task with full knowledge of the difficulties inherent in it, as it was clear that the participating States, while generally agreeing on the need to enhance the legal status of the OSCE, held different views as to how this should best be achieved.

The Greek Chairmanship considered as helpful the appointment of a Personal Representative in facilitating this dialogue. Indeed, this year we convened three Informal Round Tables, with the Personal Representative acting as a facilitator. These discussions contributed as a platform enabling all participating States fully and openly explaining their views on how to strengthen the Organization's legal framework. Unfortunately, consensus has not been reached on how to move this dialogue further.

Recognizing the high importance of the OSCE **Partners of Cooperation**, we appointed two Personal Representatives, one for Mediterranean Partners and one for Asian Partners. We also updated regularly our Partners and finally included a special reference to their active involvement in the Corfu Process, through the relevant Athens Ministerial Decision.

Given this opportunity, I would also like to warmly thank, once again, the Egyptian Government -and personally our colleague, the Ambassador of Egypt Mr. Ehab Fawzy for his dedicated engagement- the generous hospitality and the impeccable organization of this year's Mediterranean Conference in Cairo. The same goes of course to the Government of Japan, for organizing this year's Asian Conference in Tokyo. Both Conferences contributed towards more synergy and more effective use of the tools available to enhance security in the wider OSCE area.

In 2010 Greece as member of the Troika will be Chairing the Asian Contact Group. We are therefore particularly pleased with the timely adoption in Athens of the Ministerial Council Decision granting **Australia** the status of Partner for Cooperation. Australia's considerable experience will facilitate the sharing of expertise, especially in areas of peace keeping, peace

building and strengthening good governance, to the benefit of all Partners for Cooperation and our Organization in general.

Last but not least, I would like to express the Chairmanship's appreciation of the work of all **OSCE Field Operations** throughout the year; I would like to mention the great spirit of dedication demonstrated by their staff all this year and during the visits of the Chairmanship, both at Ministerial and Ambassadors' level. Particularly, I would like to commend the strong will and unwavering dedication shown by the staff of the OSCE Mission to Georgia during the last months of the phasing-out period. All field operations have been instrumental in enhancing the Organization's broader visibility this year, and every OSCE Mission, according to its mandate, has assisted the Chairmanship in our efforts to promote regional stability. Let us not forget, they assist all of us with valuable information provided in their frequent Reports, always under the able guidance of the Conflict Prevention Centre.

Dear colleagues,

In this evolving international environment, we did our utmost to uphold the values, principles and rules of the OSCE, the driving force of this Organization and the basis for our co-operative security. Today, we need each other more than ever. We pledged at the very beginning, that forging stronger ties was to be the promise of the Greek Chairmanship. I hope you feel we have kept our promise, we *did* try our best.

We have, all of us together, successfully steered this ship safely to Athens. It hasn't always been smooth sailing, we can all testify to that, but then it is never smooth sailing in the Aegean; we are used to rough seas. We are now safely docked, albeit for a short while, preparing and running final checks before we embark on a new adventure, under the stewardship of our Kazakh friends, but this time it should be on horseback!

Our Secretary General, the Director of the Conflict Prevention Centre and all the staff of our Organization's Secretariat have been instrumental in assisting this Chairmanship fulfill its duties. It is always comforting and reassuring to feel that a team of very able, some even outstanding, professionals, is always there, eager to assist you. This has been proven throughout the year and also, at its best, during the Ministerial Council meeting in Athens. The Greek Chairmanship would like to thank all of you. A special word of thanks personally to you, dear Herbert Salber, for your leadership role! Please relay our words of appreciation also to the Secretary General, and we regret that he could not be with us today on this special occasion.

Furthermore, on behalf of all of us in the Chairmanship Team, both in Athens and in Vienna, I would like to thank all of you present here today: Representatives of the Participating States, the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly and the Partners for Cooperation. It has been an honor working with each one of you. Thank you for assisting the Greek Chairmanship to fulfill our remit; thank you for inspiring us to try even harder and bring out the best that all of us had to offer. It has been very exciting, but also very difficult; at times even very frustrating, but also very rewarding. In helping the Chairmanship, you have given new impetus to this Organization.

Even if your views were not always pointing to the direction we initially had intended to draw the discussions, at least you kept us right on track every minute, and I hope that by now we have convinced even the skeptics among you initially, about our sincere commitment to uphold the principle of fair play. We tried to listen to every view [both told and untold] in order to better understand all positions and foster the - sometimes evading - but necessary consensus.

It would be a grave omission, if I did not thank our interpreters for their excellent work and a special thanks also to my dear friend Hans Michael Plut and his wonderful Team at the

Conference Services. And a special thank you to my dear Elke Lidarik, our guardian angel, who made such a good team with our own Alex Dimitrakopoulos and Manos Koubarakis!

Also our special thanks and my personal gratitude to Paul Fritch and Dov Lynch from the Office of the Secretary General, for standing by our side and for all their generous support!

Our gratitude should also be expressed to the PPIS under the exemplary professional guidance of Martin Nesirky and Virginie Coulloudon.

On a personal note, I would like to thank my colleagues in Athens and especially Ambassador Nikos Kalantzianos and our excellent Task Force, for always being there for us, day and night - but most of all I am deeply grateful to my own Team here in Vienna, my Dream Team, the best team anyone could wish for == for their hard work, their perseverance and their precious support throughout this demanding year, and, most of all, for keeping their cool, their wit and their smile, even through the roughest of times, and there were many ...

So from the bottom of my heart, thank you: Dionyssios • Eleni • Ioannis • Alex • Christos • Alexandros • Despina • Evrykleia • Evan • Vassilis • Manos • Dimitra • Theodosios • Aris • Athos • Thomas • Yannis • Danae • Hermes • Soula • Rania • Katerina • Yannis • Sabine • Yannis • Ioanna • Maria • Giulia • Viktor • George • Emma • Shirley • Christine and Nancy!

Conclusion

On a final parting note, since most of us have just returned from our trip to Egypt and since the reference to Ulysses and Corfu has been on our daily vocabulary, at least in the last six months, I would like to dedicate to each and every one of you, one of the most beautiful poems ever written in the Greek language, by one of the finest European and modern Greek poets, Constantine Kavafis, who lived and died in Alexandria, Egypt; a man who encapsulated indeed the sense of all the OSCE moral values, even though his time [1863-1933] was long before these values became our common OSCE heritage.

In 1911, Kavafis wrote *Ithaca*, inspired by the Homeric return journey of Odysseus to his home island, as depicted in the *Odyssey*. The poem's theme is that enjoyment of the journey of life, and the increasing maturity of the soul as that journey continues, are all the traveler can ask. Of course, I will read it in English, in an excellent translation by Edmund Keeley, [who also spent his childhood in Greece, as the son of American diplomat James Hugh Keeley].

Ithaca

*As you set out for Ithaca
you should hope the voyage is a long one,
full of adventure, full of discovery.
Laistrygonians, and Cyclops,
angry Poseidon - don't be afraid of them:
you' ll never find things like that on your way
as long as you keep your thoughts raised high,
as long as a rare excitement
stirs your spirit and your body.
Laistrygonians, and Cyclops,
wild Poseidon - you won't encounter them
unless you bring them along inside your soul,
unless your soul sets them up in front of you.*

*You should hope the voyage is a long one.
May there be many summer mornings when,
with what pleasure, what joy,
you come into harbors seen for the first time;
may you stop at Phoenician trading stations
to buy fine things,
mother of pearl and coral, amber and ebony,
sensual perfume of every kind -
as many sensual perfumes as you can;
and may you visit many Egyptian cities
to gather stores of knowledge from their scholars.*

*Keep Ithaca always in your mind.
Arriving there is what you're destined for.
But do not hurry the journey at all.
Better if it lasts for years,
so you're old by the time you reach the island,
wealthy with all you have gained on the way,
not expecting Ithaca to make you rich.*

*Ithaca gave you the marvelous journey.
Without her you would not have set out.
She has nothing left to give you now.
And if you find her poor, Ithaca won't have fooled you.
Wise as you will have become, so full of experience,
you'll have understood by then what these Ithacas mean.*

So, thank you, dear friends, for offering me and my colleagues the marvelous journey to our Ithaca; it's now about time for us to reach our final destination, after one year to remember of the OSCE Greek Chairmanship.

May I turn to my good friend Kairat Abdrakhmanov and, once more -this time in front of the Permanent Council- offer him our assurances that we shall remain on his side to assist him and his team in their Chairmanship next year.

With these words I would like to convey to all of you, my personal and my Team's best wishes for the Holiday Season, and urge you to rest during the upcoming recess. As there is still some unfinished business, we might need to meet again during the recess for a Special PC, but, if we do, it would be for a good cause. We will keep you posted.

Now I would like to invite the Ambassador of Kazakhstan for his remarks.

Thank you all and best of luck, dear Kairat!
