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Thank You Remarks
by Chairperson of the OSCE Permanent Council Ambassador Renatas Norkus
at the 894th meeting of the OSCE Permanent Council, 15 December 2011

Distinguished Colleagues,

Even though we are likely to have another PC meeting this year to complete some unfinished business on house-keeping of our Organization, this is our last “political” PC. And in that sense, time has come for us to move on and to wrap up the year of the Lithuanian Chairmanship.

Please allow me to thank all of you, on behalf of the CiO, the Chairmanship Task Force in Vilnius and my entire team, for the year of intensive interaction and co-operation in the framework of the Permanent Council and in other OSCE fora.

My particular thanks go to all my fellow Permanent Representatives of the participating States and Partners for Co-operation, as well as to every member of their Delegations. It is only with your co-operation and relentless search for universally acceptable solutions that we have been able during 2011 to mark progress in a number of important areas of the work of our Organization. I value your determination and professional ability to advance the interest of your respective countries while at the same time advancing our common cause, the values and noble objectives of our Organization.

I would like to warmly thank my Troika Partners, the Permanent Representatives and Delegations of Kazakhstan and Ireland, who have always been there to advise us at critical moments and to shoulder the political burden of the Chairmanship as well as to lead the work of the Contact Groups with Partners for Cooperation.

Special thanks to the German Chair of the Security Committee, the Ukrainian Chair of the Economic and Environmental Committee, and the Swiss Chair of the Human Dimension Committee who shared with the Chairmanship much of the political and organizational burden and have been very effective in structuring our work and shaping decisions for the future. The same goes, with my sincere thanks, to those numerous Permanent Representatives and Delegations who have kindly supported our efforts in the capacity of Coordinators and Chefs-de-file and Friends of the Chair on many important issues. Thank you very much, indeed!

Many thanks also to the consecutive Icelandic, Italian and Kazakh Chairs of the Forum for Security Co-operation, which has been a very important partner to us and a very effective institution throughout the year.

Very special and personal thanks to our beloved and very highly respected Maria-Pia for her excellent continued service as our Dean.

I cannot miss this opportunity to personally thank our former and current Secretaries General, the former and current Directors of the Conflict Prevention Centre, the Director of the Office of the Secretary General, Coordinator of Economic and Environmental Activities; and Special Representative and Coordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings, Director of the Conference Services, as well each and every member of the OSCE Secretariat. You are a dynamic and very professional team, you embody the institutional memory and progress of our Organization, and as a unique source of expertise and advice you are indeed indispensable to the activities of the Chairmanship and to the success of any important endeavour within the OSCE.

I would like to thank the Heads and the staff members of the OSCE Institutions: ODIHR Director, High Commissioner on National Minorities, Representative on the Freedom of the Media, and each and every member of their respective staff. We admire the courage and determination, with which all of them stand up in defence of the principles, norms and commitments. I call on all Governments to bear with them when they tell us things not to our liking. It is only through their constructive criticism and adequate follow-up that we can make systemic improvements in those important areas.

My particular thanks go to the Heads and staff members of all OSCE missions who spare no effort in doing the important work for the benefit of the host countries and our organization as a whole.

On behalf of the Chairmanship, I would like to also thank in particular the Leadership and the Special Representative of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly for having been reliable partners in all of our endeavours and events.

We appreciate the important work done by the Personal and Special Representatives of the CiO in their respective areas of activity.

We are also grateful to all other partners, such as the Non-Governmental organizations and the many international organizations, institutions and initiatives who worked together with the OSCE, stayed in touch, appeared at our Permanent Council and OSCE events, including the Ministerial Council in Vilnius.

Many thanks to our wonderful interpreters who have often been our last resort in reaching mutual understanding.

Also very special thanks to all members of the staff here at the Hofburg who took an excellent care of everything we needed for effective and comfortable work: from physical security to snacks, coffee and mineral water; and from nice, clean and orderly meeting premises to the radio, video and electronic equipment we use.

Last but not least, my sincere thanks to my own staff - Andrius, Donatas, Jūratė, Andrius, Lina, Jurgita, Donatas, Agnė, Nijolė, Viktorija, Brendan, Walter, Fausta, Eglė, Skaidrilė, Dalia, Andra,

Tomas, Liaison Officer Eglė, Interns Violeta, Paulius, Rasa, Karolis, Dovilė, Karina - for their professionalism, teamwork and consistent efforts, which, I hope, represented not only a heavy duty but also a lot of fun.

And many thanks to all those who obliged us with the graces of their support and co-operation and whom I failed to mention specifically here!

Distinguished Colleagues,

Time has come for me to pass over to Ireland the traditional “regalia” of the Chairmanship. These artefacts travel from generation to generation, from one Chairmanship to another for years. May they bring you success! Here is the **Conflicts Cushion**. Use it to prevent conflicts, not to oversleep the start of a crisis. The **Pandora Box** – the best would be not to open it at all. Please be sure to pass these on to the Ukrainian Chairmanship in a year’s time.

And here come something you will be allowed to keep once your Chairmanship is over: a **Lithuanian Weather Vane**. In old times it was used by our Curonian fishermen and enabled them to assess the weather conditions (=situation on the ground) before and when they ventured into uncharted waters. It can be effectively employed onshore and onboard, alike. Our experience tells us that such support is needed for the OSCE Chairmanship and I trust this will assist you in safely sailing the OSCE frigate to harbour at the Ministerial in Dublin next December.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

May I ask you to please extend to all incoming Chairmanships the same kind support as the Lithuanian Chairmanship has enjoyed throughout 2011.

In conclusion, I hope you will like the photograph show that captured some dear moments of our work and leisure activities throughout this year.

Merry upcoming Holiday Season to all!