



REPORT ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE CHAIRMAN IN OFFICE (from 15 – 30 December 2005)

Slovenia's OSCE Chairmanship Draws to a Close

LJUBLJANA - Slovenia's one-year turn at the helm of the OSCE is drawing to a close. On 1 January 2006, Slovenia will hand the Chairmanship to Belgium.

The pinnacle of Slovenia's Chairmanship was the OSCE Ministerial Council on 5 and 6 December in Ljubljana. The meeting ended with the adoption of 22 decisions, among them the Roadmap for Organisation's Reform as well as regional statements on Georgia and the Nagorno-Karabakh.

Slovenia has set out the agenda to Revitalise, Reform and Rebalance the Organisation. The OSCE Chairman-in-Office Slovenian Foreign Minister Dimitrij Rupel said at the outset of Slovenia's turn that the country's main objective was to overcome internal differences and address the claims made by some of the participating States that the OSCE applies double standards. The agreement on further strengthening effectiveness of the OSCE was an important achievement, as it goes a long way in tackling internal dissent. It was moreover another key success following the agreement on the OSCE's 2005 budget and on the new Secretary General earlier in the year.

The Chairman-in-Office had a demanding schedule this year: his first trip was on 4 January to Ukraine, after which he paid some 40 OSCE-related visits abroad. The OSCE played an important role in Ukraine by observing and mediating during and after the disputed presidential elections. In late March, the OSCE faced another challenge after the democratic changes in Kyrgyzstan. Central Asia remained high on the agenda of Slovenia's Chairmanship. The future status of Kosovo and the general situation in the South-Eastern Europe, as well as migration-integration and human rights also featured highly on the agenda of Slovenia's Chairmanship.

Chairman-in-Office for Izvestia: Building the Future on Common Ground

MOSCOW - Slovenia began its OSCE Chairmanship not by promising magic solutions but by advocating targeted and pragmatic steps towards thawing frozen conflicts, consolidating peace-building processes and supporting democratisation. At the end of our path, I can proudly look back at the work done over the whole year, OSCE Chairman-in-Office Dimitrij Rupel said in an article for the Russian newspaper Izvestia. It has been an active year in many regions of the OSCE. The participating States have reached consensus on numerous issues and taken decisions that will shape the OSCE's work in the future. The OSCE is undoubtedly in better shape today than it was one year ago said Chairman-in-Office. "As a result, I will hand over the Chairmanship on New Year's Eve to my Belgian colleague Karel De Gucht with a clean slate, which will allow him to devote even more time to the issues of real concern to the peoples of our community," Rupel stressed.

OSCE Adopts 2006 Budget

VIENNA - The OSCE participating States confirmed a 168.2m EUR budget for 2006 on 20 December in Vienna. "This timely agreement owes a great deal to the compromise we achieved last month over the scales of contributions. This created a positive atmosphere which inspired the adoption of the 2006 budget on schedule," Chairman of the Permanent Council, Slovenian Ambassador Janez Lenarčič stressed. "As this is practically the last meeting of the Permanent Council of 2005, I'm pleased that the final hurdle this year has been cleared," Lenarčič added.

OSCE Welcomes EU Member Candidate Status for Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

SKOPJE - OSCE Chairman-in-Office Dimitrij Rupel and the OSCE Spillover Monitor Mission to Skopje welcomed on 19 December the decision of the European Council to grant Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia candidate status for EU membership. "We congratulate the government and citizens for this great achievement," said Chairman-in-Office. "The decision acknowledges the significant progress during the last four years. At the same time candidate status binds the country to continue the necessary political and economic changes. The decision will have positive effect on the stabilisation of the wider region. We expect the rest of the countries in the region to follow this example and make a step forward on their Euro-Atlantic path," Chairman-in-Office stressed.

HAPPY AND SUCCESSFUL NEW YEAR 2006!