

ENGLISH only

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Speech of the Greek Foreign Minister
Mrs. Dora Bakoyannis

Mr. Chairman, Dear Colleagues, Ladies and
Gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure for me to participate in
the 14th Ministerial Council of the OSCE, which
this year takes place in the city we all consider
as the heart of Europe, Brussels.

I would like to both thank our hosts for their
warm hospitality and congratulate them for their
organisational skills, as well as pay special
tribute to the very energetic and dynamic Belgian
Chairmanship spearheaded by the Minister Karel de
Gucht.

Greece fully subscribes to the statement
delivered by the distinguished Foreign Minister
of Finland, Mr. Erki Tuomioja, on behalf of the
EU. I wish, however, to address certain points of
particular interest to my country.

Greece is profoundly convinced that the OSCE, as
an integral part of "European" security, has a
strategic role to play. Its actions and
initiatives cover all dimensions of security and
phases of the "conflict cycle", with a priority
in preventing the emergence of new dividing lines
and in responding to new threats with a

decision-making mechanism, based on consensus and equality.

We all agree that OSCE values and commitments are the bedrock on which our Organisation stands. We also seem ready for a firm recommitment to the standards, norms and political commitments we have signed up. Where we are still failing and in disagreement, is in the fulfillment of these commitments.

Important progress has undoubtedly been achieved in the implementation of OSCE obligations by participating States. Southeast Europe is an impressive example. My country is noting with great satisfaction that since the Thessaloniki Summit, key steps have been taken in the areas of reform and rehabilitation.

Greece's adherence to our shared vision, as well as to strengthening the role, and relevance of the Organisation remains firm. It is in this context, that my Government last year announced Greece's readiness to assume the Chairmanship of the OSCE.

Mr. Chairman, Dear Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The OSCE is constantly expected to prove its ability to adjust to the evolving security environment. We are, therefore, strongly in favour of achieving satisfactory results during this Council in implementing last year's "Decision on strengthening the effectiveness".

The in depth dialogue which took place throughout the year on this issue has revealed a broad agreement in areas such as improving the consultative process, enhancing the role of the Secretary General, strengthening the effectiveness of the OSCE institutions and field operations and providing the OSCE with a legal

status. Tangible results on these areas will create a much needed stronger sense of common purpose among participating States and make them feel they have a stake in the Organisation. There cannot be implementation without ownership! In this regard, my country supports all steps and decisions aiming at safeguarding a fair distribution of posts among all participating states.

In this venue we also welcome ODIHR's report on commitments and implementation and hope that it will contribute in taking further steps on improving election monitoring and the post-election follow-up. Implementation of human dimension standards on the basis of equal treatment and increased transparency will strengthen trust and confidence between participating States.

On encouraging regional economic cooperation we commend the work carried out by the Belgian Presidency on advancing secure transportation.

We also hail the Chairmanship's effort in keeping high on the Agenda our firm stand against terrorism and the fight against organised crime and we pledge our support to the new Special Representative on Combatting trafficking in Human Beings.

Mr Chairman, Dear Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Before concluding, I would like to raise some more points:

Early warning, conflict prevention, crisis management and post-conflict rehabilitation remain at the center of OSCE's attention. We therefore remain concerned about the persistence of a number of conflicts in the OSCE region.

On the other hand, Greece has been heartened by the progress on reconstruction, rehabilitation and reform we are all witnessing in the Western Balkans. The OSCE has been instrumental in enhancing the democratisation process and institution building as well as in fostering the engagement of the civil society in public life and the holding of democratic elections. Nevertheless, the challenges remain significant. Suffice to mention the long term fate of displaced persons.

In this context, we recognize the important role of the OSCE mission in Kosovo and we believe in its role for enhancing the democratic institutions in the area.

Greece attaches great importance as well to the strengthening of our dialogue with our Mediterranean partners and we welcome, therefore, all steps offering them the opportunity to make the best possible use of the experience and the acquis of the OSCE in all three dimensions. A stable, peaceful and prosperous Mediterranean region does remain indeed a key objective for us.

In the politico-military area, the CFE Review Conference was an event of particular significance. From our side we will continue to work towards enhancing this system of indivisible European security.

Greece welcomes the successful implementation of the second phase of the Treaty on Open Skies in 2006. We value this Treaty as an instrument significantly enhancing openness and transparency among its State-Parties. We encourage and welcome any new accession to the Treaty on Open Skies and we regret that the application for accession of Cyprus to the Treaty is still pending.

At this stage, one thing is clear: the incoming Spanish Chairmanship will be faced with a challenging and busy term. I can assure them that they can rely on our cooperation and support. My dear Miguel Angel, I wish you every success in your endeavour.

I thank you very much for your attention.