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STATEMENT

By Mr. Witold Waszczykowski

Undersecretary of State

Ministry for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland

at the 15th Meeting of the OSCE Ministerial Council

Madrid, 29-30 November 2007

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I would like first to join previous speakers in thanking our Spanish hosts for their hard work throughout the whole year. Our meeting here in Madrid in practical terms summarizes Spanish Chairmanship of the OSCE.

Poland associates herself with the statement delivered by Portuguese colleague on behalf of the European Union. Nevertheless, we would like to add a few comments in our national capacity.

**Mr. Chairman,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

More than 15 years ago a number of the present OSCE Participating States regained their independence. State-building after decades or even centuries of foreign rule had been a great challenge, which Poland had also experienced in her complicated history. In the course of such changes the OSCE expertise in fields such as democratization, preservation of the media freedom, protection of minorities, and election monitoring has continuously proved its utility. OSCE can rightly be proud for everything it had already done for Participating States in meeting or enhancing domestically the internationally recognized standards in these fields. We still need the Organization – strong and able to continue its mission.

The historic events, that I mentioned, unfortunately, have also left their complicated legacies: military, economic, psychological. Let me point to the so called local or "frozen conflicts" in the OSCE area. This year has brought to us a mixed bag of both promising and unsettling developments. The OSCE should continue to provide framework for

solutions to these conflicts and stand ready to assist in their implementation when possible. We believe that the OSCE should closely co-operate with other international organizations in this area to minimize risk to security these conflicts potentially pose, and to foster effective multilateralism in practice.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The OSCE Participating States have taken upon themselves obligations regarding human rights and democratic freedoms, processes and institutions. There is one point I am especially keen to make. The “Human Dimension” commitments of the OSCE so distinctively laid out in the Helsinki, Budapest, Moscow, Copenhagen and Paris OSCE documents, become a real point of reference and tool for shaping up a contemporary European and global order. Their implementation should remain however the top priority on the OSCE agenda.

Poland is proud to host and applauds the work of the Warsaw-based OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights - one of the key OSCE’s assets in the “human dimension” framework, and practical tools in bridging the existing gap between national commitments and reality.

Its experience and professionalism should be put to full use both in its traditional role, and also in areas of growing pressure such as tolerance and non-discrimination. Its autonomy and freedom of action must be protected, as a source of its effectiveness.

In the same spirit, I would like to underscore the importance we attach to the unhindered access of the non-governmental organization to the OSCE events. Their presence at various OSCE meetings, won’t let us

forget that these are ordinary citizens and residents of our countries who matter.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Poland continues to consider the OSCE Politico-Military Dimension highly relevant to European peace and security. The primary tool in maintaining security and confidence is the CFE Treaty. The future of CFE regime will be undoubtedly mentioned quite often today, but it deserves the highest attention in the current circumstances. For my country CFE Treaty remains the instrument of maintaining confidence and assuring predictability. Its smooth operation therefore should be our common objective. The fundamental obligation of all its signatories is to respect their commitments and avoid unilateral action.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The year following the Brussels Ministerial meeting has been full of work aimed at strengthening the effectiveness of the OSCE. We thank the Spanish Chairmanship for the hard work they have conducted. We hope that this will indeed contribute to the strengthening of our Organization. No organization can stay unchanged when circumstances evolve but, on the other hand, this subject cannot constantly dominate its agenda.

That is why we are ready to continue our common efforts to work out a solution to organisation's structural and technical issues

The incoming Finnish Chairmanship is perfectly positioned to continue the work and play leading role in this endeavour, to ensure that OSCE will contribute even more to the security and cooperation in Europe. We wish them good luck and pledge our support and co-operation.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.