

**13th Meeting of the OSCE Ministerial Council
Ljubljana, 5-6 December 2005
Statement by H.E. Mr. Ivaylo Kalfin,
Deputy Prime-Minister
and
Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Bulgaria**

Distinguished Colleagues,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Like other speakers before me, I wish to express my appreciation to the Chairman-in-Office, H.E. Mr. Dimitrij Rupel, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Slovenia, and his teams in Ljubljana and in Vienna for their dedicated work for our Organization, as well as for the gracious Slovenian hospitality extended to us in the charming city of Ljubljana at this Thirteenth OSCE Ministerial.

The delegation of Bulgaria aligns itself with the statement made earlier by the distinguished representative of the United Kingdom on behalf of the European Union. At the same time I would like to make some remarks in my national capacity.

Mr. Chairman,

In 2005 we celebrate the 30th anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act and the 15th anniversary of the Charter of Paris for a New Europe. These two anniversaries mark important milestones towards a more united and secure Europe. Over the past three decades the OSCE has created and maintained a culture of dialogue aimed at protecting human rights and dignity, which has become the basis of its success as a key contributor to security and cooperation in Europe. In the course of this process the OSCE has acquired a major role in early warning, conflict prevention and post-conflict rehabilitation.

An outstanding distinction of the OSCE is that it brings about stability and security with a human face through the promotion of democracy and human rights, and through the defense of freedom.

We believe that in the 21st century enhanced cooperation and comprehensive long-term approach remain to be the effective instruments which can ensure that democratic values prevail in all participating States and new transnational threats find adequate response. We strongly support the Organization's active involvement in the fight against terrorism through implementation of the relevant OSCE documents and decisions.

Time and again it has become crystal clear that we can be successful only if the international effort in this area is based on two fundamental principles:

One - nothing can justify the crime of terrorism, and Two - the fight against terror should be conducted with full respect for human rights.

Trafficking in human beings is another serious challenge to human security which the OSCE has tried to address comprehensively with well coordinated efforts. As primary responsibility for effective anti-trafficking action lies with participating States, our governments should

constantly update their policies and programs to provide for adequate prevention of trafficking as well as for assistance and protection of the victims, including child victims of trafficking.

Today our countries face another growing threat which the OSCE is well-suited to address. This is the threat arising from intolerance and discrimination. We believe it is imperative that we ensure an effective follow-up and implementation of the recommendations and decisions taken in Berlin, Paris, Brussels and Cordoba.

The large scope of threats and challenges we have identified in our Strategy to Address Threats to Security and Stability in the Twenty-First Century has ensued in a number of new tasks and activities for the OSCE. Those have prompted the need to readjust the existing structures, instruments and procedures of the Organization in order to increase its relevance and improve its performance.

A year ago in Sofia the participating States decided to set up a Panel of Eminent Persons to examine ways for strengthening the effectiveness of the OSCE. The Panel's report, the High-Level OSCE Consultations and the follow-up work provided for a thorough and critical review of the OSCE activities. The review process and its follow on in the run up to the Ljubljana Ministerial as well as our debate here so far, have demonstrated the need to focus on areas and tasks aimed at genuine strengthening of the OSCE.

A more realistic approach needs to be applied also towards the so called "frozen" or "unresolved" conflicts. Several times over the last few years they have come up to the verge of erupting again into chaos and violence thus reconfirming the truism that if things do not improve they are bound to deteriorate.

With this in mind, we would welcome further steps towards achieving a peaceful and lasting settlement of the conflicts in Moldova and Georgia.

In the case of Kosovo - we do believe that all involved in the status talk process – both the parties to the dispute and all third parties – are committed to ensuring genuine standards implementation in the field. We are convinced that reaching a settlement agreement can ensure a tangible European and Euro-Atlantic perspective for the Western Balkans region.

For several years now the format of the Minsk group has been preparing promising formulas for lasting solution of the conflict which is within their purview. It is time to witness the display of more political will and energy aimed at achieving tangible progress.

Certainly, the OSCE politico-military dimension remains indispensable. We support the Forum for Security Co-operation in its activities as well as the process of implementation of documents it has adopted. We remain committed to the CFE Treaty and call for implementing the Istanbul commitments of 1999 in order to allow for finalizing the ratification of the adapted agreement.

As a member of the OSCE Troika, we have continued to work for strengthening the Economic and Environmental dimension with a view to improving the OSCE performance in the areas of early warning, implementation of existing commitments and assistance for countries in transition in their reform efforts.

We recognize the role of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly as an important partner at the political level within the OSCE and particularly appreciate its contribution to the debate on the reform process. The OSCE PA provides valuable input to the election observation activities of the Organization in terms of experience, political weight and objectivity.

Two years ago we all agreed in Maastricht that the issues of international security should be approached from a global perspective. This common understanding was reconfirmed in Sofia. We need to cooperate with others not only to reinforce our own security but also to share the *acquis* of principles and norms agreed among ourselves.

The global nature of security challenges calls for cooperation beyond the limits of our region. It is not so long ago that the OSCE developed special links with its Asian and Mediterranean Partners for Cooperation. While participating in the OSCE Troika, Bulgaria was closely involved with the Contact Groups with these partners. We chaired the Mediterranean Contact Group in 2003 and the Asian Contact Group in 2005, and were able to report the successful introduction of some innovative forms of cooperation.

We believe that more efforts are needed to further develop certain priorities as formulated by the Bulgarian and Slovenian Chairmanships in 2004 and 2005, namely improvement of coordination with other international partners such as the United Nations, EU, NATO and the Council of Europe.

Mr. Chairman,

Let me conclude by thanking again the Slovenian Chairmanship for the excellent work and by wishing Belgium and, personally, H.E. Minister Karel De Gucht and his team a very successful OSCE Chairmanship in 2006.
Thank you for your attention.