

**The Twelve Meeting of the OSCE Ministerial Council
Sofia, Bulgaria, 6-7 December 2004**

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ADDRESS

**BY H.E. BOGDAN AURESCU, STATE SECRETARY
MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF ROMANIA**

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

It is with great pleasure that I congratulate H.E. Mr. Solomon Passy and his team for their outstanding OSCE Chairmanship during this year.

Since the announcement of its priorities, we welcomed the Bulgarian Chairmanship objective to focus on the effective implementation of the substantial inventory of commitments and instruments, towards enhancing the effectiveness and relevance of the Organization. It is my firm belief that this approach should remain high on the OSCE agenda.

Mr. Chairman,

Despite the lack of consensus by the time I speak, we are still hoping that we would be able to adopt, here, in Sofia, an important set of documents meant to contribute to the further consolidation of security and stability in the whole OSCE area.

I would like to underscore the importance Romania attaches to the OSCE increasing expertise and operational capacity in addressing new threats and challenges to security. OSCE activities in policing, combating terrorism, anti-trafficking, border-management and security, as well as its balanced attention towards the three dimensions: political-military, economic-environmental and human dimension are to be welcomed.

Terrorism

The recent events have proved the imperative character of the Organization's activity with regard to terrorism and, hence, the importance of joining efforts in combating this evil. ***To increase the efficiency of our efforts, it is necessary to eliminate the primary factors generating terrorism, including political extremism, aggressive nationalism and separatism, intolerance and gross violation of human rights.*** The 2001 Bucharest Plan of Action for Combating Terrorism provides, as well as the OSCE Charter on Preventing and Combating Terrorism adopted in Porto, a solid base for responding to this global challenge. OSCE has a clear role to play in adding value to the

fight against terrorism. We are looking forward to strengthening OSCE capabilities and activities in this area, including through an increased interaction with other organizations and institutions. As a non permanent member of the United Nations Security Council, Romania stands ready to make its active contribution in this field.

Reform

OSCE should continue to fulfill the functions it was established for while adapting to the changing environment in the wider OSCE region. It is fair to say that there have been *ups* and *downs* in the way OSCE was perceived as a relevant actor by different countries or groups of countries. We welcome the new impetus given to the willingness of the Participating States to move OSCE forward rather than to put it on a side track and this is a good basis for continuing in this direction. ***The general openness to OSCE reform seems to be a good sign for the future of OSCE, for its increased efficiency and viability.***

Along with other Participating States, Romania is willing to make its active contribution to reinforcing OSCE policies and mechanisms in the light of the current security challenges and developments underway in other organizations. To this end, Romania accepted to coordinate the Working Group on the OSCE Reform. Although the mandate of the Working Group was not very ambitious, we believe its activity has been very useful in identifying the way forward in upgrading the response of Organization to the current challenges.

We commend the idea of establishing a Panel of Eminent Personalities to reflect upon ways and means of strengthening the effectiveness of OSCE and hope its activity would stimulate the political dialogue among Participating States and provide the Organization with a strategic vision adapted to the new global political environment.

Frozen conflicts

Mr. Chairman,

So far, unfortunately, OSCE has not succeeded in bringing long standing frozen conflicts in the OSCE area to a peaceful solution. Progress on these issues will, in our view, considerably influence the way OSCE will be perceived in the future and it will require the concerted efforts of all important actors to help OSCE in bringing a solution.

We consider that all Participating States should more carefully analyze the factors leading to a continued lack of progress in the peaceful settlement of these conflicts. We need to become more creative in reinforcing our cooperation to ensure the relevance of the Organization as a *conflict prevention and conflict settlement institution*. Otherwise, we will face the unacceptable danger of diminishing the very substance of OSCE.

While OSCE may not be able to produce solutions by itself, it provides a valuable framework for ensuring progress in crisis management and participating States will be judged on their commitment of making this work.

Romania is particularly concerned over the lack of progress in solving the Transdniestrian conflict, which has a larger impact on regional level. We reaffirm our strong support for the respect of independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Moldova, for reaching a sustainable, lasting and comprehensive political settlement to the Transdniestrian conflict, in compliance with international law and accepted by the whole Moldovan society.

It is our hope that next year will bring a new impetus to the settlement of the so-called *frozen-conflicts* and Romania stands ready to bring its active contribution to it. It is high time that challenges be turned into new opportunities.

CFE

Dear colleagues,

I would like to **reaffirm Romania's support for the need of full implementation of the OSCE Istanbul commitments**. In our view, the non-fulfillment of the Istanbul commitments is not only detrimental to the security interests of our countries, but seriously affects the efficiency, the image and viability of OSCE.

Romania reiterates its regret on the lack of progress in the process of the complete withdrawal of the foreign forces from the Republic of Moldova, as well as on the absence of full implementation of the commitments on Georgia. ***We call on all sides to work together towards a complete implementation of their commitments in a transparent and expeditious manner.*** The longer the delay, the more complicated the settlement of the frozen conflicts.

Regional cooperation

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me shortly highlight what we consider as an ***OSCE success-story*** and an example for the future activity of our Organization. The progress achieved by the Western Balkans countries toward European integration is to be admired for and OSCE has made a considerable contribution to this developments. In the same spirit, ***we support further increased activities of the OSCE in Southern Caucasus and in Central Asia***, by helping the countries concerned to become strong, democratic and prosperous partners.

Romania is committed to supporting OSCE to boost regional cooperation in South East Europe, in the Black Sea area and South Caucasus.

Romania is ready to share its own experience not only on issues related to the transition to a democratic society and market economy, but also in identifying solutions to building confidence measures, in developing friendly neighborly relations, peace and stability in the region it belongs to. Regional cooperation and good neighborly relations are best incentives for advancing economic development and alleviating the social hardships in countries in transition.

As Chairman-in-Office of the South Eastern Cooperation Process, Romania has undertaken, as a priority, to identify and promote the best projects to bring the countries in the region closer to the European Union and to the EU standards

Mr. Chairman,

It is our conviction that OSCE can make a difference in the lives of the citizens in the participating States. In this age of globalization, many issues have become interconnected. In projecting security and stability, in further developing human rights and values, democratic and open societies and good governance, OSCE has had and continues to have a vital role to play.

What makes OSCE unique and distinct from other organizations is its comprehensive approach to security, the realization that there is no real security without rule of law and fundamental freedoms. Development of democracy, strengthening of the rule of law and genuine respect for human rights are undoubtedly indispensable conditions for the stability and security of our countries and the OSCE region as a whole.

The attention paid by OSCE to the issues of **intolerance and discrimination** is to be welcomed. The OSCE has made an important contribution to raising awareness on these threats and the measures to combat them, through its activities on **anti-Semitism, racism, xenophobia and discrimination** and through its Action Plan on improving the situation of Roma and Sinti in the OSCE area.

We have welcomed the high-profile conference in Berlin on anti-Semitism, the innovative meeting in Paris on hate crimes on the Internet and the substantial conference in Brussels in September on racism, xenophobia and discrimination. These are proofs that the Organization is ready to bring its added value to the most stringent contemporary debates. **We strongly support the follow-up** to these activities and we believe that for the next year **OSCE should look closely to the issue of combating xenophobia and intolerance against migrant workers.**

The problem of illegal trafficking, which has been a priority of all OSCE Chairmanships in last years, remains a serious challenge to our security. We hope the issue of illegal trafficking will remain high on the OSCE agenda for the years to come.

Mr. Chairman,

Today the OSCE can be more useful and relevant than ever. Nowadays, we face the new challenges and threats to security. As a broad coalition of equal partners, OSCE is suited to give an adequate response to these challenges. We must use its potential, its comparative advantage - broad membership, field activity and a comprehensive security approach - to bring added value to the task of posed by the new challenges, including in the global war on terrorism.

2005 will mark the 30th anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act and the 15th anniversary of the Charter of Paris for a New Europe. These celebrations will provide an important opportunity to reinforce efforts towards the full implementation of OSCE commitments with a view to creating a united, free, democratic, stable and secure Europe. **An OSCE Summit would be an excellent opportunity to work towards this purpose. The time is ripe to convene an OSCE Summit. Romania reaffirms its readiness to host it.**

As neighbor of Ukraine, Romania follows closely the evolution of events. We will also follow attentively the re-run of the second round of the Presidential elections. We plan also to send a number of observers. We hope that the democratic principles would prevail for the sake of stability of Ukraine and of the region.

Acknowledgements

Before concluding, I would like to express my warm thanks to the Bulgarian Chairmanship-in-Office for its contribution to the activity of the Organization and the excellent preparation of our meeting. I would, also, like to wish every success to the incoming Slovenian OSCE Chairmanship, in 2005. Let me also welcome Belgium in joining the OSCE Troika.

Thank you for your attention.