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**STATEMENT BY
MR. DIEGO LÓPEZ GARRIDO, STATE SECRETARY FOR
THE EUROPEAN UNION AND HEAD OF THE DELEGATION OF
SPAIN, AT THE EIGHTEENTH MEETING OF THE
OSCE MINISTERIAL COUNCIL**

Vilnius, 6 December 2011

A year ago at the Summit Meeting of Heads of State or Government in Astana the OSCE participating States ratified at the highest level their intention of forging a Eurasian and Euro-Atlantic security community and their willingness in this regard to continue developing the three dimensions that make up the Organization, namely the politico-military, economic and environmental, and human dimensions.

I welcome the fact that the declarations that will be adopted at this ministerial meeting will allow us to make progress in our efforts to strengthen the capacity for action in the three dimensions. At the same time, we cannot be complacent. We need to move forward, and I should like to briefly outline the areas which Spain believes should be given priority in our continuing work.

In the first dimension, it is not appropriate to talk of a restoral of confidence or the building of a security community unless we manage to give substantive stimulus to the modernization of the regime for conventional arms control in Europe, a regime that should be extended in the medium term to the entire OSCE area.

In this regard, it is also necessary to continue improving our response capacities in the face of growing transnational threats. Our Organization must improve co-ordination of its decision-making mechanisms with respect to cybersecurity and combating illicit drug trafficking or terrorism, all based on the principle that police activities should always take place within the framework of democratic guarantees.

On the subject of terrorism, I should like here to report the excellent news of the defeat of the terrorist group ETA, which recently announced the definitive end of its terrorist activities. This is a victory for Spanish democratic institutions and civil society on whose behalf I should like to thank all of the participating States and competent actors within the OSCE itself who for years have collaborated with us in achieving this much desired and sought-after aim.

The second dimension ought to be particularly relevant in this current period of economic and financial difficulties, which affects a good number of OSCE States. The

Organization should play a significant role in the building of mutual confidence and in co-operation to achieve sustainable economic and environmental development.

To this end, it is essential to ensure reliable access to sources of energy, to manage their use transparently and to respect the delicate balance in our natural environment, with a firm commitment, as is the case with Spain, to investment in renewable energy infrastructures.

In the third dimension, the Spanish Governments of the last four decades have consistently regarded human rights and fundamental freedoms among their priorities.

In the last few years Spain has made a considerable effort to extend rights and freedoms in respect of gender equality, marriage and combating domestic violence and has given legal status to the progress made in these areas. We have also stepped up our activities and effectiveness in the campaign against trafficking in human beings.

We have also devoted special attention, also within the OSCE, to attempting to achieve a universal abolition of the death penalty in the hope that in the not too distant future it will form part of the OSCE's heritage.

Furthermore, my country regards the situation of the media and of journalists to be highly relevant and has co-sponsored the declaration on fundamental freedoms in the digital era.

Mr. Chairperson,

In the conflict cycle, we believe that it is very important to make progress towards enhancing and speeding up the OSCE response to crises that might arise in its area of activity.

My Government therefore resolutely supports the improvement in the Organization's capacities, particularly with regard to conflict prevention, by strengthening existing mechanisms and innovating in areas that could facilitate rapid action in response to an early warning, for example through the prompt dispatch of expert field missions.

Finally, and as representative of a State that has traditionally been committed to intensifying our relations with the Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation, I should like to make mention, if only briefly, of the events that have been taking place on the southern shore of the Mediterranean, the so-called "Arab Spring", and to reiterate our firm support for the process of democratization and stress the need for the OSCE to pay due attention to security in the Euro-Mediterranean dimension.

Mr. Chairperson,

I should like to conclude by congratulating the Lithuanian authorities on the excellent work performed during its Chairmanship and thanking them for the magnificent welcome accorded to us in Vilnius and to wish Ireland every possible success in 2012, assuring it in advance of Spain's full co-operation.

Thank you.