

**STATEMENT BY MONSIGNOR MICHAEL W. BANACH,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE HOLY SEE,
AT THE 681ST SPECIAL MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

16 OCTOBER 2007

RE: PRESENTATION OF THE 2008 UNIFIED BUDGET PROPOSAL

Mr. Chairman,

The Delegation of the Holy See joins the previous speakers in thanking the Secretary General of the Organization, Marc Perrin de Brichambaut, for his comprehensive and detailed presentation of the 2008 OSCE Unified Budget Proposal. This gratitude extends also to the members of the Advisory Committee on Management and Finance for their work in its preparation.

Perhaps more than any other document, the Unified Budget Proposal witnesses to the multifarious interests and involvement of the OSCE in its three dimensions.

Of particular note in the 2008 Unified Budget Proposal is the introduction of phase one of performance based programme budgeting across all funds. This is indeed a major contribution to improving the transparency, consistency and effectiveness of the OSCE's programmatic work and provides a sound basis for decisions regarding the allocation of resources.

In this regard, my Delegation would like to make the following observations. In the budget proposal for the ODIHR, the lack of explicit mention of funding for the fight against discrimination against Christians and members of other religions and best practices to fight against such discrimination is perplexing, especially considering that these are commitments assumed by this Organization at least since the time of the Ljubljana Ministerial Council.

Additionally, my Delegation also believes that the destination of funds for the tolerance-related programmes of the ODIHR requires further specification, in order to reflect more accurately the areas that have indeed been agreed upon by the participating States.

We look forward to further discussions on these and other issues related to the 2008 Unified Budget Proposal and will follow them closely.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.