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GREEK CHAIRMANSHIP OF THE FORUM FOR SECURITY COOPERATION

Opening Statement by the Greek Chairmanship of the FSC: Presentation by H.E. Mr. Panos Beglitis, Alternate Minister of National Defense of Greece

It is my special pleasure to present today the program of the Greek Chairmanship of the Forum for Security Cooperation for the first session of 2010. As a former career diplomat myself, and having served in multilateral fora, I am convinced that multilateral diplomacy has constituted an unparalleled achievement of the 20th century, while effective multilateralism is the only way ahead in the 21st century, in order to successfully address the new security threats and challenges.

From this perspective, the OSCE has offered for over thirty years a unique forum for promoting political dialogue and mutual understanding, for bridging differences, dispelling concerns and fostering co-operation. If this statement is applicable for the Organization as a whole, it applies even more to the FSC. For all of us, the field of military security lies in the core of national sovereignty. Introducing the concept of cooperative security in the military sphere, through the establishment of unique arms control and confidence-building regimes, was perhaps the most important step for the elimination of the dividing lines that once separated our countries. Security and stability in Europe owes a lot to the culture of openness, transparency and predictability among the Armed Forces of the participating States, which has been developed thanks to this Forum. Therefore, Greece assumes, today, the Chairmanship of the FSC with this in mind, together with the same deep sense of duty and responsibility, as we assumed last year the OSCE Chairmanship.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Last month, at the 18th OSCE Ministerial Council in Athens, the Foreign Ministers adopted a number of very important decisions, not only for the OSCE as an organization but also for the European Security Dialogue. They adopted a Political Declaration for the Corfu Process, a Decision on furthering the Corfu Process and a Decision on issues relevant to the Forum for Security Cooperation. These three documents, examined together, provide for a very prominent role of the FSC in the European Security Dialogue. We are grateful to all our partners and especially indebted to the outgoing UK FSC Chairmanship for reaching consensus on these three Ministerial Documents. They will enable the FSC to make best use of its expertise, they increase its synergy with the Permanent Council and they provide for its enhanced contribution to the European Security Dialogue. In addition, the Ministerial Decision on Small Arms and Light Weapons remind us all of the direct contribution of the FSC in dealing with a broad range of traditional as well as new security challenges.

Implementing the Athens Ministerial Decisions will be both a duty and a challenge for the three FSC Chairmanships of 2010. Our aim will be to improve the quality of the Security Dialogue, by focusing on key security issues bearing in mind our

political which we expressed at the OSCE Informal Ministerial Meeting in Corfu to confront security challenges, in all OSCE dimensions. The FSC Security Dialogue has the potential to make a direct contribution to the discussions of the Corfu Process. Our aim is to avoid duplication of efforts. Topics pertaining to the FSC can be examined in the FSC framework; those pertaining to both the Permanent Council and the FSC can be jointly discussed in the framework of Joint FSC-PC meetings. In this regard, we consider that the five Joint Meetings of the Permanent Council and the FSC, which took place last year under the Greek OSCE Chairmanship, enriched the quality of work in the OSCE. We are looking forward to having this practice continue under the Kazakh Chairmanship as well.

Based on the two Athens Ministerial Decisions relevant to the FSC, we will focus our work in the next three months on the CSBMs, Small Arms and Light Weapons, the principles inherent in the Code of Conduct, and OSCE mechanism.

In this regard, I would like to make some specific references to these topics:

- The Vienna Document has been one of the most successful sets of CSBMs [Confidence and Security Building Measures] worldwide. As we speak, somewhere in the OSCE area an inspection and evaluation visit takes place, while notifications are being transmitted, and the teams of our Verification Centres communicate among themselves. This is an achievement that should not be underestimated. If we ask the question: How can we improve the implementation of the CSBMs [Confidence and Security Building Measures] and make them better? Whether we can strengthen them further in a way that will provide equal predictability and openness to all, then the answer given unanimously by the 56 OSCE Foreign Ministers in Athens is “YES. We can”. Working on the Vienna Document, ten years after its latest review, will aim to enhance further the culture of dialogue and cooperative security. Our work should be based on the premise that whatever we are doing should strive to confidence-building, both in the military and the political spheres. Therefore we all need to show mutual respect, increased understanding and genuine willingness for compromise. It should also lead to equal transparency and predictability for all. Working on how to improve the Vienna Document has the potential to enhance our common culture of cooperative security.
- The Code of Conduct is one of the most revered documents for my country. It enshrines the fundamental principles of international law governing inter-states relations. As we have explained in our Defence Planning Document, a major security doctrine component for Greece relies on the need to maintain peace and stability and the inviolability of existing international borders. Being a “status-quo oriented” country, we consider that the principles enriched in the Code, including the commitment to refrain from the threat or the actual use of force against the territorial integrity of sovereignty of any State, are cornerstones of inter-state relations. Democratic control of the armed forces remains paramount in our efforts to build strong state institutions based on the rule of law. Last but not least, the Code of Conduct recognizes in article 17 the comprehensive nature of security. The 1994 Code of Conduct encapsulates the notion that security begins with the inherent dignity of the individual and that all efforts should aim at eliminating the inter-state and intra-state challenges to this basic premise.
- According to the Athens Ministerial Decision on issues relevant to the FSC, the Forum should contribute to improving OSCE procedures and mechanisms in this area of crisis management. The OSCE toolbox for conflict prevention and crisis management has been discussed during last year’s autumn meetings of the Corfu Process. At the time, it became clear that this toolbox, despite its large size, has proven either too cumbersome or insufficient to cope with the challenge at hand.

The Georgian crisis of August 2008 reminded us all of the true potential and the shortfalls of the OSCE. During the Corfu discussions, we concluded that every conflict is unique in its historic background and root causes and, therefore, there can be no universally applicable solutions. However, we concurred that there are universal principles to be applied to all conflicts. We also concurred on the multidimensional nature of conflicts and the need to provide multidimensional responses. This is the comparative advantage of the OSCE in handling a crisis situation vis-à-vis other international actors which can use either soft power only or hard security measures only. Last but not least, we identified the political will of all "56" as a crucial factor for the activation of the OSCE toolbox when circumstances on the ground demand it. This common understanding should guide our efforts when examining ways to improve the OSCE toolbox. First of all we need to examine why our mechanisms remained dormant or unutilized when crises were ongoing; why successful activation of early warning mechanisms was not followed by "prompt reaction" through the appropriate conflict prevention mechanisms. We should identify where we failed and try to remedy these shortfalls.

- Throughout 2009, in the context of our FSC as well as of the Corfu Meetings, illicit arms transfers were highlighted as a challenge to European Security while the OSCE work on Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALWs) was underlined particularly in connection to combating transnational threats. The OSCE, mostly through its Document on Small Arms and Light Weapons since 2000, has played an important role in promoting normative work related to Small Arms and Light Weapons and Stockpiles of Conventional Ammunition, a fact that is widely recognized by experts and has been underlined in various international fora. Nevertheless, it is important for the organization to renew its efforts in this direction, by exploring ways in which to strengthen its *acquis* and to remain at the forefront of the international initiatives to deal with Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) issues. On the basis of the Athens Ministerial Decision on Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW), the Greek FSC Chairmanship has tabled a Food for Thought Paper on a Plan of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) taking into consideration suggestions made during the successful OSCE Meeting to Review the Organization's Document on Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) held last September. We plan to promote this Food for Thought Paper aiming at improving the implementation of existing Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) measures as well as OSCE normative work in this field. This discussion will hopefully constitute an important and substantial framework for preparing the OSCE's contribution to the 4th Biennial Meeting of States on Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW), to be held in June in New York.

- In the context of our FSC Security Dialogue, as well as last year's Corfu Meetings, the importance of combating the proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction was repeatedly emphasized, as a politico-military challenge, as well as a phenomenon closely tied to a broader set of transnational threats. It is thus with great pleasure that we welcomed the adoption of a wide-ranging Declaration on non-proliferation adopted at the Athens Ministerial (and inspired by Ukraine) which we believe will help the Forum explore ways in which it can contribute to this particularly important field over the coming years. In this context we note with satisfaction the importance that UNSCR 1810 attaches to the promotion of UNSCR 1540 by regional organizations and express our hope that 2010 can be a year in which further work towards the implementation of these Resolutions can be promoted by our Organization.

- Similarly, we welcome discussions on developing a comprehensive approach to enhancing cyber security, which took place during the successful Workshop held by the OSCE last March and look forward to furthering work in this field which also has a particular importance for European Security.

- The Vienna Document 1999, the Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security, and the Documents on Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) and on Stockpiles of Conventional Ammunition (SCA) remain the basic normative documents of our Forum. In order to enable us to continue to make progress in these areas, the Greek Chairmanship, in agreement with the other members of the FSC Troika and the Conflict Prevention Centre (CPC), has decided to confirm the mandates of the FSC Chairmanship's coordinators, together with the Chairman of the informal group of friends on Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW):

- Colonel Eischer, of the Delegation of Austria, as the Co-ordinator for the Code of Conduct;
- Lieutenant Colonel Petersen, of the Delegation of Denmark, as the Co-ordinator for projects involving SCA;
- Colonel Hartnell, of the Delegation of the United Kingdom, as the Co-ordinator for projects involving Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW);
- Colonel Byren, of the Delegation of Sweden, as the Chairman of the informal group of friends on Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW).

I would like to express to all our Coordinators our sincere appreciation for their willingness to accept the burden of these assignments.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Greece succeed in the FSC Chair the United Kingdom, whose Chairmanship was more than outstanding. We are looking forward to the support and advice of our extended Troika 2010 members, the UK, Hungary and Ireland, as we will implement the FSC's agenda during this session. Together, we will also work for the major event of the first session, which is the Annual Implementation Assessment Meeting, in cooperation with the AIAM's Chairs, Cyprus and Croatia. We are grateful to the other two 2010 FSC Chairs, Hungary and Ireland, for our impeccable cooperation in drafting the Tentative Program of the year. Our sincere appreciation goes to the FSC Coordinators for their advice and of course to the Conflict Prevention Centre and, especially, the FSC Support Section. Last but not least, we are grateful to all our partners for their trust and support to Greece during our 2009 OSCE Chairmanship. I can assure you all, that we will serve as FSC Chairmanship with the same dedication and commitment.

Thank you for your attention.