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# **Czech Republic**

## **Fifteenth Meeting of the OSCE Ministerial Council**

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Karel SCHWARZENBERG**

**Minister of Foreign Affairs  
of the Czech Republic**

**Madrid, 29<sup>th</sup> November 2007**

*Check against delivery*

Mr. Chairman, Mr. Secretary General, Distinguished Colleagues,

Let me begin by expressing my appreciation to the Spanish hosts for the hospitality and organization of this Ministerial Council Meeting. I am pleased to head my delegation and discuss with you the key issues affecting the security in the OSCE area.

OSCE with its concept of cooperative and comprehensive security used to be referred to as a value based organization. Founded on the principles of democracy, respect for human rights and the rule of law, the Organization has contributed to the outstanding political transformation of Europe and beyond. These core principles have not outlived themselves, the process is not complete. In a globalizing world, the respect for these principles at the national and international level is increasingly a condition for the effective interaction of States and their societies. It is the key to peace, stability, conflict prevention and sustainable long-term economic development. It is therefore disappointing that within the OSCE we continue to observe the indisputable drift in respecting norms and commitments through which we have sought to promote OSCE-wide democratic development, protect fundamental freedoms and settle conflicts and disputes peacefully.

This is the only way to keep the OSCE relevant in the complex security environment. We have never hesitated to express our concerns that the wide range of OSCE commitments is disputed, re-interpreted, or yet worse, simply ignored by some of our fellow participating States. We are confronted with the theories justifying this worrying trend in part of the OSCE world: It is pretended that some elusive stability is more important than democracy, that economic development and the strengthening of state control must precede a full political liberalization and democratization. We oppose these explanations and claim that the true long-term political and economic stability requires genuine, inclusive political transformation, encompassing the full enjoyment of human rights and democratic principles, including free and fair elections. This is a key source of our frictions on how to adapt OSCE to serve its participating States. It is not reforms the Organization lacks, it is common political will to reunite around the founding principles which is being lacked.

Nowhere else is this more evident and alarming than in the field of respecting the autonomy of the Office of Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR). Under the pretext of reforming it, some participating States continue to strive to restrain ODIHR's mandate to observe elections, foster human rights and the rule of law. ODIHR must not lose its autonomy and be subject of political control of participating States. Undermining its autonomy and *modus operandi* amounts to disrespect for our commitment to one of the fundamental ingredients of democracy - free and fair elections. Most regrettably, the questioning of the institutional attachment of ODIHR in one case has already resulted in degrading ODIHR's capability to carry out its functions in full and on time.

Confidence building measures had stood at the cradle of the CFE Treaty and its adapted version. With its unprecedented level of transparency in military affairs, the CFE has played the central role for European security and even today its importance cannot be

overemphasized. Together with our Allies we have shown the enormous flexibility and constructive approach to find a solution to preserve it and accomplish the entry into force of the Adapted Treaty. It is disappointing that the Russian Federation has not reciprocated our approach and still intends to suspend its obligations related to the implementation of the CFE Treaty. It is still time to reconsider it and we call on the Russian Federation to do so. Otherwise, it would be legitimate to doubt whether the Russian Federation is truly interested in the continuation of this fundamental arms control regime.

The Organization has been for years involved in the fruitless search for peaceful solutions to protracted conflicts in Moldova and Georgia. These conflicts distract the attention of the political leaderships of these two countries from the political and economic transition needed to advance their declared objective of European and Euro-Atlantic integration. The OSCE must continue to mobilize all involved to resolve these conflicts and seek to increase the effectivity of the current negotiation and peacekeeping formats. We call on all parties concerned to restore their efforts to make progress and above all to refrain from instigating escalation and confrontation.

Let me conclude by wishing every success to our Finnish colleagues during their Chairmanship in 2008.