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**2009 ANNUAL SECURITY REVIEW CONFERENCE
OPENING SESSION
STATEMENT BY THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE PERMANENT COUNCIL
AMBASSADOR MARA MARINAKI**

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,
Dear Colleagues,

On behalf of the Chairperson-in-Office H.E. Mrs. Dora Bakoyannis, I have the pleasure of opening the 2009 Annual Security Review Conference and to welcome you all to this forum. It is a special honor to welcome as a High Level Guest of the 2009 ASRC the Foreign Minister of the Russian Federation, H.E. Mr. Sergei Lavrov. Mr. Minister, on behalf of the Greek Chairmanship, I want to warmly welcome you and thank you for accepting to address the Opening Session.

The ASRC provides us with a unique opportunity to exchange thoughts and ideas on the security situation in the OSCE area, and to review the security work undertaken by the Organization and its participating States, in line with Porto Ministerial Council Decision No. 3. This year, the Conference takes place under the overall theme: "Co-operative Security: Concept and Commitment – Achievements, Challenges and Prospects".

Over the years, we have built unique security architecture in Europe which provides the framework for Co-operative Security. In our opinion, Co-operative Security rests on the underlying premise that security is indivisible. This means that co-operation is beneficial to all participating States because the insecurity of one State can affect the well being of all. It also means that no participating State should enhance its security at the expense of the security of another participating State.

For this reason, the ASRC provides a timely forum to discuss how participating States have worked together to address common security issues and to generate new ideas for enhancing Co-operative Security. Let us not forget that Co-operative Security also comprises the notion of OSCE co-operation with other international organizations and institutions as well as the OSCE Partners for Co-operation. Their attendance at this Conference is therefore much welcomed and we look forward to their active participation in the sessions.

In short, Co-operative Security – linking non-military and politico-military aspects of security – will prove to be the overall theme to structure our discussions during the next two days.

In preparation of this Conference, the Chairmanship asked the OSCE Conflict Prevention Centre to prepare a background document that takes stock of existing OSCE commitments related to Comprehensive and Co-operative Security. This document was distributed prior to the ASRC. I am certain that this will facilitate our work during the next two days, and beyond.

Judging from the long list of participants, I am pleased that the Agenda of this year's ASRC has sparked the interest of so many high-level representatives of participating States, as well as representatives from international and regional organizations and OSCE officials. I believe that our discussions will be enriched by the interventions of our High Level Guest His Excellency Minister Lavrov, as well as a very distinguished panel of keynote speakers.

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

When we assess the security situation in the OSCE area, in particular since the last ASRC, there have been developments that constitute a serious setback for security. Unfortunately, we have to note that the implementation of important OSCE Principles and Commitments has become increasingly problematic.

The developments in Georgia are a case in point. Despite our political dialogue in the Permanent Council and the Forum for Security Co-operation and our discussions during last year's ASRC, we witnessed the outbreak of an armed confrontation only weeks after the Conference had ended. This deplorable sequence of events shows that there is need to strengthen the OSCE's early warning and preventive mechanisms.

Following the outbreak of hostilities, the Finnish Chairmanship made it a priority to broker a cease-fire and to deploy additional monitors as soon as possible, and with visible results.

Since the beginning of this year, the Greek Chairmanship has committed itself to continue the efforts of the previous Chairmanship to reach a consensus regarding the continuation of the OSCE presence in Georgia. Indeed, the adoption of the PC Decision in February on the prolongation of the mandate of the Military Monitors until the end of June led to a new round of intensive consultations between the parties involved and gave hope that further progress was within reach.

Regrettably, and despite tireless efforts, consensus could not be reached. As a result, one of the largest OSCE field operations in the region will close its doors mere days from now - this, despite the clear need for an OSCE presence to contribute to security and stability in the region which has been recognized by all the participating States.

In this regard, I wish to reiterate that the Chairmanship continues to stand ready to facilitate consultations on a comprehensive OSCE presence in Georgia, if the sides wish it. In the meantime, however, we also remain committed to the Geneva Discussions, which we co-chair together with the UN and the EU.

The three co-chairs addressed the joint meeting of the FSC/PC last Wednesday underlining that they remain fully committed to co-chairing the Geneva Discussions since the participation of the international organizations in the Geneva process is not tied to their presences on the ground but is in line with their overall general security-related mandates.

Another worrying development that directly affects the security of the entire OSCE area concerns the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe, where no progress can be noted since the last ASRC. The Greek Chairmanship shares the opinion that the CFE Treaty remains a 'cornerstone of European security', and a solution to the political crisis over the CFE regime needs to be found urgently.

These challenges are just few reminders that, 20 years after the fall of the Berlin Wall and despite the tremendous progress we have made towards a Europe whole, free and in peace, we have not reached yet our target. We are close but not there! We have to redouble our efforts to solve the old problems and address new threats and challenges.

So, on a positive note, I would like to mention that, despite the challenges and different perceptions, over the past six months, the debate that has started within the OSCE regarding the future of European security, signalling the fact that all 56 participating States realise their common destiny. Following the high-level Working Lunch at the Helsinki Ministerial Council, where European Security was discussed, the Greek Chairmanship expressed its intention to take this dialogue forward in order to restore confidence and trust among the participating States, reconfirm the concept of comprehensive and indivisible security, maintain and improve existing structures, enhance Co-operative Security and achieve the maximum implementation of existing commitments, including conflict resolution.

After Helsinki, the dialogue continued in various OSCE bodies: in the framework of the Permanent Council, the Forum for Security Co-operation and the Parliamentary Assembly. At the end of April, the Chairmanship organised an Ambassadors' Retreat on the 'Future of European Security and the Role of the OSCE' with the aim of providing a clearer structure to the discussions and to prepare for the Informal Ministerial Meeting in Corfu which will take place later this week.

During the Retreat, participating States reaffirmed that the OSCE is the appropriate forum for discussing new ideas on European, or pan-European Security due to its inclusive membership, its comprehensive and co-operative approach to security and its extensive experience in dealing with security challenges.

In light of this debate, today's opening session presents an excellent opportunity to reflect on proposals brought forth by some participating States which are aimed at further enhancing European security.

Taking stock also of the outcome of this ASRC, it is our hope that the informal Ministerial Meeting in Corfu will set out a clear strategy for how to address the Security Dialogue and any proposals for change. Subsequently, the Ministerial Council in Athens may well be the forum where participating States will determine formally the roadmap for the content and format of a future dialogue on European security.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The three working sessions that have been scheduled for today and tomorrow will allow us to identify how the concept of Co-operative and Comprehensive Security has evolved since the signing of the Helsinki Final Act, and how its basic principles have been implemented in the different areas:

The first session, highlights the importance of addressing and settling protracted conflicts in the OSCE area, which has been a priority for the Greek Chairmanship. I look forward to the discussions in this session that will allow for a review of our activities related to crisis/conflict situations and their impact on peace, stability and security.

In this regard, the relevant work of OSCE field operations and the use of OSCE Mechanisms and Procedures may be examined. As for the latter, the Chairmanship would be interested to hear from participating States how the mechanisms and procedures in the existing OSCE toolbox can be more systematically applied in crisis situations, and whether participating States see the need for updating this toolbox. The Chairmanship stands ready to closely examine recommendations made in this regard.

The second session will review politico-military aspects of security, with a focus on confidence and security building measures and arms control agreements. As stated before, the future of the CFE Treaty attracts the special attention of the Greek Chairmanship and we hope that this session will provide new ideas for resolving this outstanding issue.

In a few minutes, my colleague Ambassador Gaprindashvili will provide a comprehensive report on the Forum for Security Co-operation, so I will not elaborate too much on FSC-related issues. However, I wish to stress the positive co-operation and co-ordination between the Permanent Council and the Forum for Security Co-operation that we have experienced so far, including during the preparation for this Conference. The good co-operation between the PC and the FSC has proven to be useful, indeed even vital in times of crisis.

The third session on preventing and combating terrorism and related threats will offer the opportunity to discuss OSCE activities in counter-terrorism as well as security challenges and threats related to terrorist activities.

Countering terrorism has been on the agenda of the OSCE since the Istanbul Summit in 1999 and we can assert that today the OSCE region is better prepared and equipped to deal with this security threat. Also, OSCE plays an important and widely recognized role in the global effort against terrorism.

In this regard, the Report on OSCE counter-terrorism activities, prepared by the Secretary General in accordance with Helsinki Ministerial Council Decision No. 10 serves as an excellent point of departure for considerations about how to further enhance the OSCE's counter-terrorism work.

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I hope that this ASRC will prove to be a productive event, with constructive and open discussions that result in useful and practical recommendations aimed at enhancing the effectiveness of our security work.

In this spirit, let me now give the floor to the Chairman of the Forum for Security Cooperation, Ambassador Paata Gaprindashvili to present the report of the FSC to the Annual Security Review Conference.-