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Conference Services

At the request of the OSCE Delegation of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia the attached statement by the Minister for Foreign Affairs, H.E. Mr. Nikola Poposki made at the 18th Ministerial Council, Vilnius, 6 – 7 December 2011, is being distributed to all delegations.

Republic of Macedonia
MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

ADDRESS

By

H.E. NIKOLA POPOSKI

Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Macedonia

at the

18th MEETING OF THE OSCE MINISTERIAL COUNCIL

Vilnius, 6-7 December 2011

Mr. Chairman,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me join the previous speakers in congratulating the Lithuanian chairmanship on the results achieved in steering the activities of our organization throughout 2011. This has been a challenging task. We have made many balanced decisions after long hours of negotiations. Despite occasional skepticism regarding the present role of the OSCE, I am confident that you share my opinion that our animated debates are in fact a confirmation of the OSCE's enduring significance as a forum for a continued dialogue on different aspects of security. The OSCE, with its cooperative and multidimensional approach to security, remains one of the pillars of the Euro-Atlantic security architecture.

Mr. Chairman,

For the Republic of Macedonia, the OSCE remains a delicate political instrument for dealing with the complex existing and emerging challenges. To respond appropriately, we need to strengthen our dialogue based on our shared values, to ensure long-term coherence of our priorities and actions and to enhance the flexibility of our response.

Our meeting is an excellent opportunity to review the progress achieved in the implementation of the Astana Commemorative Declaration. The set of decisions we are expected to adopt at this Ministerial reflects the fundamental importance of the OSCE comprehensive concept of security and a fine balance among the three dimensions.

Promotion of the rule of law, democracy and human rights is of fundamental importance. In this regard, our commitments to the freedom of expression must be reaffirmed. Therefore we fully support the decisions on enhancing the safety of journalists and on pluralism in the digital media. Furthermore, the Republic of Macedonia was one of the co-sponsors of the draft Declaration on Fundamental Freedoms in the Digital Age.

As we are to chair the Forum for Security Cooperation next year, the Republic of Macedonia would like to underline the issues of interest for the work of the Forum. Confidence and security building measures remain central to the overall security in the OSCE region. In this regard, we welcome the adoption of the 2011 Vienna Document and urge for further improvement of this landmark document. The decisions on small arms and light weapons and on stockpiles of conventional ammunition on the agenda of this meeting are of special importance for enhancing the security in the OSCE area, as a whole.

Mr. Chairman,

The Republic of Macedonia fully supports a wide range of activities in the economic and environmental dimension. It is beyond doubt that they contribute to prevention of conflicts and confidence building. Therefore our dialogue in this area, including on energy security and on transport, is of utmost importance. In this context, let me also underscore the importance of the decision on promoting equal opportunity for women in the economic sphere.

The OSCE has always been recognized for its preventive, early warning and early action functions and therefore we must continue to strengthen its capacities in these areas. In this regard, the decision on enhancing OSCE's capabilities in addressing the conflict cycle is, in our view, crucial. We are all aware that protracted unresolved conflicts seriously threaten our common security and therefore we need to intensify efforts to resolve them in a peaceful and negotiated manner, with full respect for OSCE norms, principles and commitments and through full observance of international law.

The OSCE must strengthen its effectiveness in response to transnational threats to security and therefore the package of related decisions we are expected to adopt provides an adequate response to the complex security environment we live in.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The dramatic changes taking place in a number of our Mediterranean partners call for our enhanced cooperation with them. We are confident that the OSCE, in cooperation with other international organizations and on request by our partners, may provide valuable support and expertise in their transition to democracy.

We also fully support further strengthening of the OSCE's engagement with Afghanistan. The Republic of Macedonia is already giving significant contribution to the collective efforts to promote stable, independent, prosperous and democratic Afghanistan.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We would like to welcome the completion of the mandate by the OSCE Office in Zagreb, in cooperation with the Croatian authorities, and to underscore that this model may serve as a positive example of a successful end story in the area of field operations.

The countries of the Region we belong to, the South-East Europe, have made enormous progress, both individually and collectively. The assistance of the OSCE and its institutions was instrumental and appreciated. We are now all on the path to the European Union and must endeavor to resolve the outstanding issues through dialogue.

Mr. Chairman,

The OSCE has experience, tools and capacity to act. Irrespective of whether the challenges are called old or new, regardless from what document our commitments come from, the OSCE has been actively engaged on their resolution. What remains to be done is to continue to improve, focus and strengthen our common resolve.

Let me conclude by wishing much success to our future Chairmanship, Ireland, and assure them of our full support in the implementation of the priorities we have jointly defined.

Thank you.