

OSCE meeting aimed at fostering co-operation to reduce environmental threats.

Prague. The OSCE Chairman-in-Office, Spanish Foreign Minister Miguel Angel Moratinos, delivered a speech, on 21 May, at the opening ceremony of the 15th OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum which was held in Prague.

More than 300 decision-makers, experts and officials from more than 60 countries were in Prague for the three-day meeting. The Spanish Environment Minister, Cristina Narbona, made a presentation during the opening session.

Minister Moratinos underlined the importance of a Spanish proposal for an OSCE Environmental Security Strategy comprising two parts - a Madrid Declaration on Environmental Security and as a complement an Action Plan containing recommendations. The Strategy will be discussed at the OSCE Ministerial Council, to be held in November in Madrid.

The Chairman invited participants to the International Panel on Climate Change meeting, to be held later this year in Valencia, and to the Zaragoza Expo 2008 on water management and sustainable development.

Mediators and observers in Transdnestrian conflict met in Madrid

Madrid. At the initiative of the OSCE Chairman-in-Office, Spanish Foreign Minister Miguel Angel Moratinos, the mediators and observers who co-operate in the settlement of the Transdnestrian conflict in Moldova met on 25 May at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Co-operation in Madrid. Participants exchanged views on the current situation, and future prospects.

Minister Moratinos hoped that the 5+2 format, which brings together the sides with mediators and observers, can resume its work very soon.

The meeting was headed by the Director General of Foreign Policy for Europe and North America, Jose Maria Pons, on behalf of Minister Moratinos

OSCE Chairman urged Ukraine's top political leaders to resume negotiations

Madrid. The OSCE Chairman-in-Office, Spanish Foreign Minister Miguel Angel Moratinos, expressed concern on 25 May about rising political tensions in Kyiv and called for negotiations to be resumed.

The Chairman-in-Office called for a full respect of democratic institutions and encouraged both sides to resume talks in a constructive manner to ease tensions.

OSCE Chairman welcomed arrest of war crimes indictee Zdravko Tolimir

Madrid. The OSCE Chairman-in-Office, Spanish Foreign Minister Miguel Angel Moratinos, welcomed on 2 June the arrest of war crimes indictee Zdravko

Tolimir, who was one of six remaining fugitives wanted by the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY).

Moratinos stated that the OSCE encourages the authorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia to fulfil their obligations towards the ICTY.

Spanish Chairmanship said OSCE ready to help Azerbaijan with further reforms

Baku. The OSCE Chairman-in-Office, Spanish Foreign Minister Miguel Angel Moratinos, said on 4 June that Azerbaijan's further democratic development is crucial for the South Caucasus and the entire OSCE, and the Organization stands ready to help.

Minister Moratinos also encouraged intensive mediation efforts by the OSCE Minsk Group Co-chairs, which had brought Azerbaijan and Armenia closer to a framework agreement on the basic principles for the peaceful settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

In meetings with President Ilham Aliyev, Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov and other officials, Minister Moratinos said Azerbaijan had made good progress implementing democratic reforms and he encouraged the leadership to continue that work, including in the run-up to next year's presidential election.

Spanish Chairmanship said Armenia made election progress and OSCE willing to help further

Yerevan. The OSCE Chairman-in-Office, Spanish Foreign Minister Miguel Angel Moratinos, said on 5 June that Armenia made commendable progress during last month's parliamentary elections and the OSCE is willing to help the country continue that trend in next year's presidential poll.

In meetings with President Robert Kocharian, Prime Minister Serge Sargsyan, Foreign Minister Vartan Oskanyan and other officials, Minister Moratinos noted OSCE and other international observers had reported a positive trend in May's parliamentary elections.

The Minister noted the OSCE, with the assistance of its Office in Yerevan, was doing valuable work in other areas such as the environment and community policing in Armenia. This would all help cement reforms that are crucial to the South Caucasus and the OSCE as a whole.

OSCE States must do more to promote tolerance, Chairman told high-level meeting

Bucharest. The OSCE Chairman-in-Office, Spanish Foreign Minister Miguel Angel Moratinos, told on 7 June that intolerance and discrimination could threaten global security, and the OSCE's participating States need to strengthen efforts to avert this threat.

More than 600 participants discussed what steps the Organization and its 56 participating States and 11 Partners for Co-operation could take to promote tolerance and reduce discrimination. They also reviewed progress made since previous OSCE meetings focused on tolerance.

The Chairman called on participants to handle intolerance and discrimination with a common approach, using legislation and its implementation, data compilation, education, intercultural and interreligious dialogue, and communication.

The Chairman-in-Office raised the "Alliance of Civilizations," an initiative of the United Nations and co-sponsored by Spain and Turkey, as a tool intended to heal the wounds of sharing a globalized society, which is diverse and independent.

OSCE Chairman issued statement after CFE Treaty Conference ended in Vienna

Madrid. Following the conclusion of the Extraordinary CFE Conference in Vienna on 15 June, the OSCE Chairman-in-Office, Spanish Foreign Minister Miguel Angel Moratinos, called on the States Parties to the Treaty to overcome existing differences.

Minister Moratinos stressed that, in the view of the Spanish Presidency, the political-military side of the OSCE is still an area of crucial importance for dialogue, and called on the States Parties to the CFE Treaty to make use of every possible channel of negotiations and exert the sincerest political will in order to arrive at a common ground where they could resolve the issues still outstanding with regard to the CFE Treaty and the obligations deriving from it.

OSCE Chairman welcomed arrest of Vlastimir Djordjevic, war crimes indictee

Madrid. The OSCE Chairman-in-Office, Spanish Foreign Minister Miguel Angel Moratinos, welcomed on 18 June the arrest of war crimes indictee Vlastimir Djordjevic in Montenegro.

Retired Police General Djordjevic has been indicted by the ICTY for crimes against humanity and war crimes committed against Kosovo Albanians in 1999.