

**Statement by H.E. the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Cyprus**  
**Mr. Markos Kyprianou at the 16<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the OSCE Ministerial Council,**  
**Helsinki, 4-5 December 2008**

Mr. Chairman, dear Colleagues,

Allow me to begin by joining others in thanking our colleague, Alex Stubb, for the efficient and skillful way in which he and his team have organized this Meeting, as well as for the warm hospitality extended to us in the symbolic for the OSCE city of Helsinki.

The determined efforts and work of the Finish Chairmanship, under the competent leadership of Minister Stubb, deserve our full and sincere appreciation. Our Finish colleagues performed their difficult duties in an outstanding manner and proved the crucial role of our Organization during an extremely challenging year for the OSCE region, marked by the crisis of last August.

Dear colleagues,

Cyprus fully subscribes to the statement delivered by France on behalf of the European Union. But I would like to take the opportunity to offer some additional thoughts.

Our extremely fruitful and vivid discussion during yesterday's lunch is another indication that the OSCE continues to be a great asset in the European security policy architecture. Our organisation has developed a unique comprehensive approach to co-operative security, complemented by a transatlantic dimension.

We therefore believe that the OSCE constitutes the natural framework for continuing the discussion began by the Russian and the French Presidents. The proposed basic elements and principles should guide us for our future deliberations, and we wish to express our readiness to engage constructively in this process.

The consolidation of security and stability in the OSCE region depends on the engagement of all participating states to the promotion of the activities of the OSCE in all three dimensions.

In the first dimension, we value the work of the Forum for Security and Cooperation in promoting an open dialogue aiming at the establishment of confidence building measures, the reduction of tensions and the prevention of conflicts.

In this framework, Cyprus wishes to highlight the importance of the Open Skies Treaty as a useful confidence-building tool, which enhances confidence and

promotes transparency regarding the military forces and their activities. We therefore regret that our application for accession is still being blocked.

In the military sector, Cyprus is fully complying with all relevant commitments. In the coming months, we expect to receive the technical assistance of the OSCE in order to proceed with the destruction of 324 portable air defence systems, according to all international standards and taking into account both the issues of safety and environmental protection.

OSCE is primarily a political organization and its added value consists in raising awareness and stimulating political will to address traditional and new threats to security at the highest level.

In this framework, Cyprus fully supports the initiative of the Finnish Chairmanship to promote the role of the OSCE in addressing the security implications of climate change. We equally attach great importance to the adoption and implementation of all the Ministerial decisions in the third dimension.

The interdependence between the security of the OSCE region and the Mediterranean is evident. As a Mediterranean country, Cyprus has traditionally expressed its engagement to the continuous efforts towards strengthening the cooperation between the OSCE and the Mediterranean Partners in all three dimensions.

Mr. Chairman  
Dear colleagues,

All participating states appear to share the aspiration of giving further impetus to the work of the Organization, and our deliberations during the last two days have demonstrated that the 2009 OSCE agenda will be a challenging one. We are confident that the incoming Greek Chairmanship, under the capable leadership of Minister Bakoyannis, will handle its duties in an efficient and effective way. We would like to wish Minister Bakoyannis every success, and assure her of our full support and cooperation for the year to come.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman