



REPUBLIC OF ALBANIA  
MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

**Address**

**by H.E. Mr. Edmond Haxhinasto,  
Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister  
of the Republic of Albania,  
as delivered at the 18 Ministerial Meeting of the OSCE  
Vilnius, 6 December 2011**

**Thank you Mr. Chairperson,  
Distinguished Colleagues,**

Let me start out by joining my voice thanking our Lithuanian hosts for their warm hospitality and excellent working conditions offered to this Ministerial. I would also like to express our appreciation for Lithuania's able stewardship at the helm of the OSCE and its commitment to advance the implementation of our common vision of a "security community", laid down in Astana last year.

**Distinguished Colleagues,**

2010 has been a dramatic and crucial year for some of our Mediterranean Partners who have gone through sweeping democratic transformations. The OSCE must sustain this major transition process to democracy, by offering its unique expertise gathered through years of successful engagement in Eastern Europe and Western Balkans. In this regard, we warmly welcome the relevant decision on deepening cooperation with our partners for cooperation and invite them to make use of the OSCE's toolkit in areas of their interest and in the spirit of equal partnership.

On a bilateral level, Albania stands ready to assist our Mediterranean partners, the way it was itself assisted for the last two decades, by sharing the experience and offering the best practices.

We stand open also to other countries who wish to embrace the Helsinki values and be part of this Organization.

The increased cooperation with our Mediterranean Partners should not distract our attention from the challenges Afghanistan continues to face in its path toward stability, security and democracy. We therefore strongly support a decision to enhance the OSCE's engagement with Afghanistan and continue to support the international efforts to stabilize this partner country. Along with the second phase of OSCE cross-dimensional projects for Afghanistan, such a decision has a critical importance in view of the expected transition in the year 2014: a topic widely discussed during the Afghanistan international conference held yesterday in Bon.

The events of today in Afghanistan only confirm that our engagement there should continue until our Afghan friends have in their hands the reigns of security.

## **Dear Colleagues,**

The Vilnius Ministerial Council presents an excellent opportunity to take stock of intensive discussion carried out this year in Vienna and adopt important decisions on several topics of major relevance for the future role of OSCE. The decisions in the human dimension are a case in point. We would welcome the approval of the decisions aimed at enhancing the safety of journalists and on Fundamental Freedoms in the Digital Age.

Albania supports an OSCE decision on the Conflict Cycle, increasing the analytical and mediation capacities of the Secretariat, strengthening coordination of OSCE's executive structures and envisaging a stronger role for the CIO in the different phases of the conflict cycle.

This year the OSCE kicked off a commendable work to boost its niche capacities in the fight against transnational threats. In this context, we attach great importance to the approval of relevant documents, which will define the activities of the OSCE in this field for many years to come.

## **Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Kosovo's independence, which as ICJ concluded, did not violate any international law, has undoubtedly contributed to regional peace and stability. It is our strong view that Kosovo's independence provides an opportunity for Serbs and Albanians to work together and look at their common European future with confidence and without resentment. In this spirit Albania has fully supported the EU-facilitated technical dialogue between Kosovo and Serbia as two sovereign and independent neighbouring countries and continues to call for the full implementation of the agreements already reached between the two sides.

I take this opportunity to hail the conclusion of the agreement on the integrated agreement between Kosovo and Serbia and consider it an important step in the EU integration of these two countries.

Nevertheless, Mr. Chair, in our view the status quo in the North of Kosovo is neither acceptable nor sustainable. This is all the more true in light of the recent escalation of violence directed against KFOR soldiers. Such a dangerous situation calls for more resolute action to put an end to the intolerable reign of lawlessness persisting in the North of Kosovo.

## **Excellences,**

By way of conclusion, I would like to touch upon Albania's OSCE agenda.

Our immediate priority in this Organization aims at boosting Albania's engagement in the field of tolerance and non-discrimination. It is in this framework that Albania is offering to host the next high level Conference on Tolerance and Non-Discrimination in the year 2013. We believe that our offer responds to the need of the OSCE to diversify the venue of a similar event and benefit from the historical experience of its participating states in this field. We stand ready to work with the incoming Chairmanships, interested countries and the Secretariat to adopt an OSCE decision and to make this event happen in 2013.

Albania has demonstrated that it can take the lead in working for peace and security in a historically difficult region as the Western Balkans. We are confident

that we can successfully deliver also at a larger and more challenging scale. In this context, Albania stands ready to provide its share of contribution by taking the helm of this Organization in the near future.

Finally, Mr. Chair, let me convey our warm congratulations to Ireland and wish them every success for their Chairmanship-in-office in the coming year. This Chairmanship will enjoy our strong support in implementing its priorities and addressing challenges that stand in the way of fulfilling a genuine security community.

I thank you all for your kind attention!