



**ALBANIAN DELEGATION**

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**STATEMENT**

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DEPUTY MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

HEAD OF DELEGATION

OF THE REPUBLIC OF ALBANIA

TO THE 12<sup>TH</sup> MINISTERIAL COUNCIL OF THE OSCE

(Sofia, 6 - 7 December 2004)

Mr. Chairman,  
Dear Colleagues,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

We have gathered in Sofia on the occasion of the 12<sup>th</sup> Ministerial Council Meeting at an important moment in the 30 years of the history of the Helsinki process. We pay tribute to all the OSCE participating states that have worked intensively for and contributed to the preparation of the Sofia Ministerial. We would have to further concentrate efforts to make it a success the participating states expect.

Let me say, Mr. Chairman, before I deal with a few other issues, that Albania highly appreciates the excellent performance of the Bulgarian Chairmanship in the political helm of the organisation, thanks to its clarity and good orientation, dedicated staff in the Mission in Vienna and here in Sofia. We also thank you Chairman, the Bulgarian Government and people for their hospitality and very comfortable working conditions.

Albania welcomes and appreciates the role played by the OSCE, as an investor in promoting peace, stability, security and co-operation in the OSCE region. Albania has been strongly committed to strengthening and consolidating security and cooperation in the OSCE area and to the OSCE's common principles and norms. Albania is fully committed to an ever more effective OSCE in the benefit of its participating states.

Albania and all our region have paid special attention to the strengthening of the rule of law, the fight against organized crime, trafficking and corruption, as well as to the consolidation of the market economy, the strengthening of administrative capacities and the creation of a climate of confidence and of a close regional cooperation. We have achieved significant results in all these aspects. This is also due to the contribution of the OSCE.

However, some of the challenges we face have a wider transnational nature. As such, they can only be met through a combination of individual efforts and of regional and international cooperation. We are convinced that this policy leads to peace, stability, prosperity and European integration.

We firmly believe in the OSCE and its values. Thanks to its contribution, important developments have taken place in the OSCE's area. Today, the OSCE has reached a crucial moment. A reform process has recently started. It aims at increasing the effectiveness, image and prestige of the organization, as well as its role, contribution and relevance in Europe's security and political environment in a broader sense.

Albania shares the idea of the necessity of improving the efficiency of the Organization, in order to adapt the OSCE to the new geopolitical

realities. In this respect, we think we need to focus more on efficient implementation of existing norms and instruments.

Transformations that have happened, including in the OSCE's area, need an enhancement of the Organisation's activity and political leadership.

One of the key future decisions which would be very telling for the OSCE in the years to come would be the selection and election of the new Secretary General. In these trying moments for the OSCE, in particular, when approaches and understanding of its role, relevance, contribution, character, etc., seem to be far apart and adding to a divide, time has come for bold decisions. Time has come for more confidence and trust. It would be most appropriate, from all aspects, if this post goes to a candidate from a developing country and young democracy in a transition period. They too can be able to contribute and display, through the commitment, competence and professionalism of the candidate, their direct contribution, confidence and dedication to the organisation and its scope and goals. Albania has made available a very experienced diplomat for this post.

Consensus is precious in and for the OSCE. It should be preserved. It reflects the very *raison d'être* of the equality of sovereign participating states in the Organisation. It is difficult to reach it, the process is slow, but when it is reached and all are satisfied it represents a solid compromise. This is a sign of strength. Consensus over this issue would be one that would truly represent the unforced but free will and choice of participating states.

Albania strongly supports the approach of the Bulgarian Chairmanship to decrease OSCE Missions in Western Balkans, including Albania, shifting budget resources in other areas. Albania believes in the necessity of reorienting field Missions activities, focusing on fewer but more substantive ones and taking into consideration primarily the views and priorities of the host country. This should be done in conformity with new realities and developments.

Progress and democratic achievements in Albania, and in our region as well, must be reflected in the OSCE's activity there. We have always expressed positive considerations and appreciation *vis à vis* the role of the OSCE Presence in Albania to further consolidate democratic institutions and intensify the integration processes. We appreciate its cooperation and contribution in reforming the electoral code and in ensuring that the upcoming elections in Albania are in conformity with the highest international standards. Let me, at this juncture, highly appreciate the role and contribution of the OSCE/ODIHR in the elections held in Kosova last October. Let me also commend the overall OSCE's role in Kosova, as one of the principal pillars of the UNMIK, in building multi-ethnic democratic institutions and rule of law there.

Mr. Chairman,

Progress in any country is progress for the Organization and its work, too. This should be reflected. On the other hand, enhancement and effectiveness of the Organization has positive effects for all of its participating states. We strongly believe that Sofia Ministerial would be another benchmark for the OSCE standing. The documents we would be adopting tomorrow will be an added value, helping to build on common ground in order to provide a strategic orientation for the OSCE in the years to come. To achieve that goal, joint efforts, common understanding, tolerance and respect for one another, should prevail.

Let me say, by way of concluding, Mr. Chairman, that the OSCE is equally important for all its participating states. It is important and valuable for our democracies, for our future. Therefore, all together, we should work with a future-oriented approach and perspective.

Thank you.