

**ADDRESS BY H.E. ALİ BABACAN  
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**The OSCE Ministerial Council meeting, Helsinki  
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Mr. Chairman,

At the culmination of Finland's Chairmanship of the OSCE, it is a pleasure to be here in Helsinki today - the city where the OSCE process started some 34 years ago. I sincerely hope that as we return to our roots the Helsinki spirit will prevail over the next two days, resulting in a strong re-confirmation of our collective commitment to the ideals, values and purposes set down by the founding fathers and further developed since then.

This year, steering a safe and steady course has not been easy. Allow me to thank you, Minister Stubb, personally, as well as your competent team of collaborators, for the great responsibility you have shouldered on behalf of the participating States and for the exemplary fashion in which you have executed the difficult mandate entrusted to you.

Mr. Chairman,

The Final Act, signed here in Helsinki more than three decades ago, under very different circumstances from today paved the way for a Europe whole and free. Nevertheless, re-emerging fragmentation in our geography has reminded us, all too painfully, that the consolidation process is not yet complete. If for no other reason, the OSCE remains an essential tool for comprehensive dialogue on all aspects of security and requires our collective nurturing. It would be a delusion to believe that the Helsinki process could be emulated or re-created under a different framework with better results.

Mr. Chairman,

The Helsinki Ministerial coincides with the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights from which the OSCE has drawn inspiration for its own human dimension acquis. We look forward to re-confirming our commitment over the full gamut of principles and values enshrined in that document through a Ministerial Statement.

The OSCE's human dimension commitments based on universally recognized norms and principles constitute a beacon for our orientation on the path towards building and strengthening democracy, the rule of law and consequently peace and stability on our

continent. A scaling back or willful interpretation of our collective commitments, efforts to destabilize or render ineffective OSCE institutions must carry a heavy price tag.

In the current security environment where perceptions of difference based on culture and religion have created a deep chasm among and even within our societies, pursuit of commitments on addressing all manifestations of intolerance and discrimination must rest at the center of our endeavours to promote human rights and democracy. We commend the tireless efforts of the three Personal Representatives of the Chairman-in-Office on Combating Intolerance and Discrimination. Their observations and recommendations guide us in identifying areas where further action is necessary, rendering their contribution all the more indispensable in the coming years.

In order to address the challenges stemming from discrimination and intolerance globally and to replace the professed notion of clash with a deeply held conviction for the reality of an alliance, political leaders of Spain and Turkey launched the initiative of Alliance of Civilizations. Universal scope of the Initiative has been acknowledged thanks to its endorsement by the UN and its Honorable Secretary General. We would continue to encourage closer association between the OSCE and the Initiative, not least through all OSCE participating States becoming its Friend, thus expressing a commitment to its laudable goals.

Mr. Chairman,

Taking steps to protect our people from terrorism while at the same time respecting their fundamental rights should continue to be a high priority for the OSCE. This is a multi-dimensional phenomenon which requires multi-dimensional responses. We need to further focus on fostering international cooperation and expanding mutual support and solidarity among national governments. In this respect, our experience and credentials in countering terrorism put us at the frontline of this endeavor.

We welcome efforts to develop a multi-faceted relationship with Afghanistan, including in areas such as police, fighting illegal drugs, border security and management. We all have a vested interest in a stable, peaceful Afghanistan at the OSCE's borders. In view of Turkey's historically close ties with Afghanistan, we intend actively to contribute to the implementation of the relevant Madrid Ministerial Council decision.

Mr. Chairman,

Kosovo as a new member of the international community is showing a steady progress in building its governing institution. This nascent democracy requires our full attention. The volatile situation on the ground renders the continuation of our commitments indispensable and the OSCE activities, including through the field office in Kosovo, even more vital.

We must equally seize every opportunity to address the unresolved conflicts in the OSCE area. The war in Georgia is a sharp reminder of the potential for conflagration in the so-called protracted conflicts. Now we must rest our hopes on a successful outcome of the talks which have recently started in Geneva. Any solution to the conflict must be based on the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Georgia.

The ongoing mediation efforts of the Co-Chairmen of the OSCE Minsk Group present the best opportunity for a peaceful settlement of the Nagorno-Karabagh conflict. We encourage both sides to work with the Co-Chairmen for overcoming their differences and, in the interim, to present to this body a substantive regional declaration pointing the way ahead. In addition to its active membership in the Minsk Group, Turkey continues to contribute to the peace process through its multiple and mutually complementary initiatives. Respect for the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan must constitute the bedrock of any settlement.

We are heartened by the recent political momentum generated towards the resolution of the Transdnistrian problem, based on the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Moldova. The "5+2" format remains the sole negotiating platform capable of addressing the interests and concerns of all the parties. We hope that necessary political will and the right incentives would be deployed so as to reinvigorate the process.

Being an inseparable part of the region and the drive to discharge our responsibility as the neighboring country were the key incentives that led my Government to bring its contribution to bear on the resolution of conflicts in the Caucasus. In this vein, we have proposed to establish a platform for dialogue among the countries of the region, namely the Caucasus Stability and Cooperation Platform. Our initiative, to which we have received positive response, is aimed at complementing the efforts of existing mechanisms and helping restore confidence among the regional States.

Mr. Chairman,

One of the fundamental contributions of the OSCE to the security and stability of our region is the arms control and confidence and security building measures which have been formulated in its ambit. Preservation and implementation of the mechanisms established under these arrangements continue to be essential. Unfortunately the Conventional Forces in Europe Treaty (CFE), to which Turkey fully adheres as the cornerstone of European security, is at present suspended by one State Party and hence has partly been invalidated. We regret that. The long-term consequences of this stalemate are unpredictable. A process of erosion of the regime can hardly augur well for its future viability. The crisis in Georgia has demonstrated the value of maintaining well established and strong international security

mechanisms, in particular those designed to provide transparency and stability through a system of regional and sub-regional limitations on conventional armaments. We therefore call on all partners to redouble their efforts to restore the viability of the CFE regime and to avoid any actions which would result in its further erosion. We strongly believe that preserving the CFE together with the flank regime is in the interest of all the States Parties.

Mr. Chairman,

I have to express dissatisfaction that the Convention on the International Legal Personality, Legal Capacity, and Privileges and Immunities of the OSCE still awaits adoption. We hope that action to be taken by this body, as an interim measure, will enhance the profile of the text and invigorate political will to formalize it.

Mr. Chairman,

I would lastly like to address a matter which is also the leitmotif of this Ministerial, that is: Dialogue on European security. Turkey welcomes the prospect of engaging in an enhanced dialogue within an inclusive framework covering all aspects of comprehensive security. We believe that the OSCE, as the embodiment of the pan-European compact and with its broad mandate offers the most suitable platform for discussing the future of European security. Naturally any new security dialogue should strengthen the OSCE processes and contribute to consolidating existing acquis, including security regimes and mechanisms which operate under the organization's pervue. The Ministerial meeting enabled the elaboration of wide ranging views on the state of European security and its future. We shall study these views closely. They already point to a way ahead.

With regard to a possible OSCE Summit to be considered either alone or in the context of a new security dialogue, Turkey, as the host to the last OSCE Summit in 1999 stands ready to share its experience. This much we can say with confidence : Summits need to be perceived and launched as the common project of participating States through their commonly expressed political will and shared goals to be inscribed in its mandate. They require a careful preparation phase, bereft of any artificial time pressures.

Mr. Chairman,

We look forward to working and closely cooperating with the next year's Chairman-in-Office, Greece. We wish Greece well and success as they take on this critical task. But more broadly, let me state that Turkey will continue to support the work of this very important and useful Organization.

Thank you.