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**Intervention by Mme Aurelia Bouchez, Deputy Assistant Secretary General
For Regional, Economic and Multilateral Affairs to the 17th OSCE Ministerial Council**

DASG/RESA's intervention at the OSCE Ministerial Council Meeting

1-2 December 2009, Athens

Distinguished Ministers,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

- I am pleased to address the 17th OSCE Ministerial Council today on behalf of the Secretary General of NATO. I would like to convey his greetings to this important meeting in Athens.
- The founding fathers of NATO were driven by a determination to safeguard the freedom, common heritage and civilisation of their peoples, founded on the principles of democracy, individual liberty and the rule of law. We are meeting here, today, in the city which is the cradle of these values.
- I would like to express my **appreciation to the Prime Minister of Greece**, Mr. Georgios Papandreou, for his conduct of this meeting and the Hellenic Chairmanship, during which we continued the excellent cooperation between our two organizations. We look forward to the continuation of this cooperation under **Kazakhstan's Chairmanship**.
- Today's security challenges threaten the basic elements of security, and efficient response to them far exceeds the ability of any one nation or institution. It requires the broadest possible international co-operation, and the application of a comprehensive set of instruments – including political, economic and military ones.
- **NATO and the OSCE** have important roles to play in this respect and, over the years, have developed regular political dialogue as well as operational interaction in the field, notably in the Balkans. We highly appreciated the briefing by Minister Droutsas, to the NAC on November 25 and that Secretary General de Brichambaut addressed the EAPC Ambassadors in October - for the third consecutive year.
- 2009 has been a very important year for the OSCE, with the start of the **Corfu Process**. We consider the Corfu Process a major success of the Hellenic Chairmanship. NATO welcomes the ongoing frank and constructive dialogue on European Security and is grateful for being able to participate in it through its participation at the informal Ministerial in Corfu, as well as this meeting.
- **NATO's position** is well-known: the existing structures – NATO, the EU, the OSCE and the Council of Europe – continue to provide every opportunity for countries to engage substantively on Euro-Atlantic security with a broad acquis, which includes the respect for human rights; territorial integrity; the sovereignty of all states, including their right to decide their own security arrangements; and the requirement to fulfil international commitments and agreements, including the arrangements on arms control.
- Within this framework, NATO is open to dialogue on a broad, cooperative approach to Euro-Atlantic security, for which the OSCE provides the appropriate, inclusive format. We also maintain that the common aim of such a dialogue should be to improve implementation of existing commitments and to continue to improve existing institutions and instruments so as to effectively promote our values and Euro-Atlantic security.

– We welcome that the series of meetings in Vienna have taken stock of all three dimensions of security. At the same time, NATO regrets that, despite the Hellenic Chair's laborious efforts, no consensus could be achieved to extend the mandate of the OSCE Mission in **Georgia** after June 2009.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

– Since the OSCE Ministerial in Helsinki, NATO Heads of State and Government celebrated NATO's 60th anniversary in Strasbourg and Kehl, and tasked the Secretary General to develop a new **Strategic Concept** by the time of NATO's next Summit in Autumn 2010. The Secretary General convened a Group of Experts to lay down the foundation of this work, including through a series of seminars. The OSCE was invited to participate in one of these seminars. The new Strategic Concept will assess the new security environment and provide guidance on how to successfully meet challenges in the 21st century. The Secretary General will update NATO Foreign Ministers on the state of play of work at their meeting next Thursday and Friday.

– The Ministers' agenda will also include **Afghanistan**, a key priority for NATO. Afghanistan is at a critical juncture and, following the elections, Afghans should gradually take leadership of their affairs. NATO will work with the new government, strongly supporting it to have a capable and inclusive administration, one in which corruption has no place. Through the International Assistance Force (ISAF) and the newly launched NATO Training Mission – Afghanistan, NATO will also help the Afghans to build the Afghan National Security Forces.

– In Strasbourg-Kehl, Allies also reiterated their commitment to NATO's **Open Door** policy and their strong support for the Euro-Atlantic integration of NATO's Partners in the Western Balkans region and elsewhere. The ministers will have separate meetings with **Ukraine** and **Georgia**, which will allow them to reiterate their strong support for these countries' aspirations to join NATO.

– Foreign Ministers will discuss the **NATO-Russia** relationship, and have a meeting with Minister Lavrov. That meeting will be the first formal NATO-Russia Foreign Ministers' meeting in two years. NATO maintains that resetting co-operation with Russia remains a priority and that to achieve the necessary momentum for our practical co-operation, we need to develop greater mutual confidence through frank and constructive political dialogue, including on issues where we disagree. We hope that we can give fresh impetus to a relationship that is not only vital to European, but also to global security

Ladies and Gentlemen,

– One year before the next NATO Summit, in Portugal, NATO's Foreign Ministers will now set the stage so that the Alliance maintains the ability to perform the full range of its missions in the 21st Century. We look forward to our continued co-operation with the OSCE to achieve our common goals.