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**Statement by H.E. Pierre Chevalier, Special Envoy for the Belgian OSCE
Chairmanship 2006 at the OSCE Ministerial Troika meeting with the
Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation, 4 December 2005,
Commercial Fairground, Ljubljana**

Minister Rupel

Your excellencies

Ladies and Gentlemen

In the course of 2005, the Belgian Chairmanship of the Mediterranean Contact Group, with the support of the Secretariat, continued to enhance dialogue between the OSCE and its Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation (MPCs), in light of the recommendations contained in the report on the implementation of PC Decision 571.

In 2005, Partners continued to have more regular access to the meetings of the **Permanent Council**, and on several occasions provided a valuable contribution to the debate. This complemented the regular work in context of the Mediterranean Contact Group.

The MPCs also took active participation in **the major OSCE events of the year**, such as the Annual Implementation Assessment Meeting, the Annual Security Review Conference, the Economic Forum and the Human Dimension Implementation Meeting. They also took active participation in the Cordoba conference on Anti-Semitism and Other Forms of Intolerance and sent delegations of parliamentarians to the relevant sessions of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly. Special side events for the MPCs were held at the Economic Forum and the ASRC.

In addition, for the first time, on 23 November, at the initiative of the Belgian Chairmanship of the Forum for Security Co-operation, a meeting took place between the Mediterranean and Asian Partners and the FSC, on **small arms and light weapons**. The meeting provided a valuable contribution to the preparations to the 2006 UN review conference on SALW.

The MPCs also participated in the **high-level consultations** on strengthening the effectiveness of the OSCE in Vienna on 13 September 2005. On that occasion a common statement was prepared by the six Partners. It was delivered on behalf of the six MPCs by the Ambassador of Algeria.

Regular dialogue between the OSCE and the MPCs was maintained through nine meetings of the **Mediterranean Contact Group**, which covered a broad range of topics. The agenda included discussions aimed at seeking the input of the MPCs prior to OSCE key events such as the Economic Forum, the Cordoba Conference on anti-Semitism and on Other Forms of Intolerance, the ASRC and the HDIM.

The Group also was given the opportunity to hear from the Chairs of the various **informal groups of friends** established by the Slovenian Chairmanship, on issues such as reform; improving the functioning and effectiveness of field operations; borders; combating terrorism;

and, gender equality and anti-trafficking. It also heard from Belarus rotating Chairmanship of the Forum on OSCE's work in the politico-military dimension in 2005.

But we also tried to broaden our horizons and look at what was being done by other organizations. To this end, speakers from the the **European Commission and NATO** were invited for an exchange of views on their respective Euro-Mediterranean dimensions.

The Special Representative of the OSCE **Parliamentary Assembly** continued to inform the Contact Group about the PA's activities such as the annual Mediterranean Forum in Sveti Stefan to which parliamentary representatives from the MPCs took part.

In addition, two informal meetings between the MPCs and the three **Personal Representatives on tolerance** and non-discrimination were also held in the course of the year, which proved fruitful for both the Personal Representatives and the Mediterranean Partners.

Experts from the MPCs were invited to Brussels for an event organized by the Verification Agency of the Belgian Armed Forces at the Melsbroek Air Base, demonstrating the **Open Skies Treaty** regime's role in contributing to enhancing openness and transparency among States on 4-5 July 2005. An exchange took place on the Treaty on Open Skies, the Pod Group, Benelux co-operation and a technical description of the Open Skies Pod System, followed by a visit and static demonstration of the Open Skies Pod System. Participants gained a first-hand experience of the technology employed by the Pod System, as well as a practical demonstration of the kind of information obtained through the observation flights.

Arguably, the highlight of the year was the **Mediterranean Seminar** on the role of the OSCE and its Mediterranean Partners in migration and integration policies, held in Rabat on 8-9 September.

I would like to first of all thank the Moroccan authorities for having hosted the Seminar. It was the first time our annual seminar was held in a country of the Maghreb. It gathered delegations from 33 participating States, all six MPCs, three Asian Partners, various international organizations and NGOs.

The Seminar was a moment of joint ownership on an issue of common concern. The interest was evident to further develop and intensify the mutual understanding on a subject that exemplifies the common security interests on the two sides of the Mediterranean shores.

Allow me to briefly comment the Seminar and its outcome.

The **main conclusion** to be drawn from the Seminar is that a concerted effort between countries of origin, transit and destination is needed to end the flow of illegal trafficking, but also to develop a common approach to addressing the causes of migration. Conversely, well-managed migration is a source of economic, social and cultural progress.

To counter those common concerns, **various proposals were made and new concepts were put forward** during the seminar. These are contained in the document "recommendations and suggestions", which was issued at the end of the Seminar.

Among these are the organization of pre-migration training, the creation of reception facilities to make it easier for migrants to adapt and the introduction of "integration contracts" between migrants and the authorities of the host country.

The idea of holding meetings of experts and officials from capitals (so-called "task forces") to follow up on the work conducted in Rabat was also put forward.

Concerning the further development of the OSCE Mediterranean dialogue, an additional suggestion was made to consider establishing a Partnership Fund sustained by voluntary contributions from participating and Partner States.

Let me underline again the number and the quality of the proposals that have been tabled in Rabat. Follow-up and implementation is now the message.

Colleagues,

I would like to share with you some of our **thinking for the future**. The relationship between the OSCE and its Partners is not a one-way process. It should be a true partnership in which both sides actively engage with each other and jointly produce more security, to the benefit of all. The partnership can only stay relevant for its participants when they all truly invest themselves into it. “To sustain the level of investment”, that is the greatest challenge for all of us.

We should now think of **further innovative approaches**, including establishing a multi-year perspective. Because of their complex nature, many of the substantive issues cannot be dealt with in one single year. Hence a co-ordinated approach and a smooth succession among different Chairmanships of the Contact Group could be very useful. We are working on this already with our Spanish colleagues.

In conclusion, allow me to say that I have not drawn such a long list of achievements for my own self-gratification. Rather, to prove the point that the Mediterranean Contact Group is becoming more and more active. Most of the above initiatives went to the credit of our partners first and foremost. I am glad to say that my friend H.E. Miguel Ángel Moratinos Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Spain, and the able Ambassador Sanchez de Boado will inherit a lively, dynamic and committed group.

Thank you for your attention.