



MINISTÉRIO DOS NEGÓCIOS ESTRANGEIROS

## **12th OSCE Ministerial Council**

**6-7 December 2004**

### **Speech of the Portuguese Minister for Foreign Affairs, Ambassador António Monteiro**

Mr. Chairman,

This has been a year of major and profound developments both in Europe and in the world. The OSCE, as a major player in the field of security and stability, has had to adapt to the constantly emerging new realities.

My first words are thus to congratulate the Bulgarian Presidency for the work it carried out in 2004 and for the guidance it provided for this Organization. Minister Solomon Passy and his team gave an important contribution in mobilizing the OSCE to face the current challenges. We are all grateful for those efforts.

Mr. Chairman,

The 55 countries represented around this table accepted a set of commitments and obligations, which over the three decades have not ceased to consolidate. However, recent events have reminded us that these are values that should not be taken for granted. This is an unpredictable world, with a complex multiplicity of new risks and threats. Some States suffer from a lack of democratic tradition, and some national institutions still seem to be distant from the democratic aspirations of their own people. Therefore, the OSCE remains an important instrument to further strengthen and implement a set of common



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principles and values based on democracy, the rule of law, and the respect for human rights, which contribute decisively to the consolidation of security and stability and to foster economic development.

**(Terrorism)**

Mr. Chairman,

The complex and transnational nature of terrorism demands a coordinated, comprehensive and long-term approach by the international community, including measures directed at suppressing the various circumstances and factors that provide fertile breeding ground for terrorist acts: institution building, the respect for democracy and the rule of law, as well as the reduction of poverty, intercultural and inter-religious dialogue, arms control and the peaceful settlement of conflicts.

During the Portuguese Chairmanship in 2002, terrorism became an issue very high on our agenda. The Charter on the Prevention and Combat of Terrorism, approved in the Porto Ministerial, remains a cornerstone of our commitment, combining the use of traditional OSCE principles along with a firm message to fully preserve the fundamental rights and freedoms of our citizens in the course of the fight against terrorism.

Terrorism constitutes a gross violation of human rights and must be fought in a manner that safeguards and respects those same human rights. Terrorism takes away our safety and freedom, and in fighting it we must preserve that safety and that freedom. We need to live safely, but we also need to live freely.

The OSCE must continue to expand its role on the terrorist financing front, namely in implementing the UN Conventions, through legislative reform, through



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facilitating information exchange on trafficking issue, and border security, amongst others. We know well what is at stake, and our publics demand action.

I take this opportunity to announce that, upon the request of some Participating States, my Government is prepared to resume the organization, next year, of the Lisbon Meetings on the prevention and combat of terrorism. These meetings proved to be interesting fora for sharing national and regional experiences, under the spirit of the Platform for Co-operative Security. In 2005 we would like to adapt the previous model and hope that the OSCE may benefit from the renewal of this initiative.

**(Council of Europe)**

Mr. Chairman,

The European security architecture combines different actors in a context with a variable geometry. The complexity of this network of existing organizations and bodies is not always well understood by our public opinions, and there are risks of duplication and competition. There is indeed room for institutional co-operation.

The OSCE and the Council of Europe share the same vision of a stable and secure region based on the common values of democracy, human rights and the rule of law. As future Presidency of the Council of Europe, in 2005, Portugal would like to express, in particular to the future Slovenian Chairmanship of the OSCE, that we are firmly committed in further developing the close coordination that already exists between these two Organizations, with a view to guaranteeing an active and results oriented cooperation.

**(Reform)**

Mr. Chairman,

While reform remains a key word for all international organizations, we need to be careful not to engage in a chronic obsession for reform. In particular, we refuse the idea that reform should be used in such a way as to question our common acquis or to revert the trends of History.

Realism is the key-word for this exercise. We are already far from the days in which the small structures of a Conference were enough to respond to our needs. Those fragile structures are surprisingly still in place, with very few adaptations, projecting an image which is not a solid reflection of the OSCE institutions.

We believe the moment has come for a global functioning change of the OSCE. We support a forward-looking and action-oriented exercise for the changes needed in the Organization. The basic line that we foresee as the guiding principle of this reform is the reinforcement of its structures.

In particular, we think that it is essential to go towards a strong reinforcement of the role of the Secretary-General, providing him with a more visible international profile and giving him full authority over the different bodies which over the years have been created around the Secretariat. We very much hope that 2005 will be the year to launch a renewed OSCE.



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I would also like to make a reference to the importance of the relationship between the OSCE and all its partners, in particular our Mediterranean Partners, with whom we are aiming at creating synergies with parallel processes in other institutions.

**(Conclusion)**

Mr. Chairman,

Despite the challenges that lay ahead, there are solid reasons for optimism. This Organization has crossed many dividing lines that existed in the past and must now prevent the ones that threaten to emerge in the future. We must ensure that the rich cultural, religious and ethnic diversity of this vast area becomes a source of strength, not of strife, of unity, not of division.

The OSCE is an exceptional tool for dealing with this new and complex security environment. It is up to all of us to make full use of the OSCE potential to the benefit of all individuals and peoples from Vancouver to Vladivostok.

My final words are to express my best wishes to Slovenia, the future Chairmanship of the OSCE. Minister Dimitrij Rupel, I wish you all the best in this challenging task. You know you can count on our full co-operation.