

**HEAD OF PRESENCE REMARKS AT THE SIGNING CEREMONY
OF A TECHNICAL AGREEMENT WITH THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE
REGARDING THE PROJECT ON CHEMICALS**

16 April 2012

Minister Imami,
Deputy Chief of Staff,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Today, as the Head of the OSCE Presence in Albania, I just had the great pleasure to jointly sign a Technical Agreement regarding a new project dedicated to the disposal of chemical products together with our partners from the Albanian Ministry of Defence.

The funding for this project comes from Czech Republic and Turkey in big parts. More will be needed and we are looking for donors.

Dear Minister Imami, I think this marks again an important step of co-operation. This project is an important part of the general framework of demilitarization.

From an OSCE perspective, this activity is of vital interest of the country for two good reasons.

One good reason is that the destruction of all hazardous chemicals is a matter of security: security for the population, security for the environment, and also security for the region.

In addition and based on its mandate, the OSCE Presence has a decisive role and responsibility to hold in this area.

For more than four years now, after the terrible explosion of Gerdec, the OSCE Presence in Albania has been committed in supporting the Ministry of Defence in its endeavours to safely destroy surplus ammunition and dangerous toxic chemicals.

Regarding the chemicals, the OSCE has helped in the disposal of 34 tons of rocket fuel in 2009, funded by Denmark, Finland, Greece and Sweden, and 120 tons of Dichloroethane in 2010, funded by the Netherlands.

The OSCE Presence has also assisted the Ministry of Defence with equipments and materials for the destruction of ammunition in 2010 and 2011, funded by Denmark and Germany.

It is encouraging to see that the Ministry of Defence is continually making strenuous efforts to professionally develop its demilitarization action plan and thereby pave the way to a country liberated from its old and most dangerous leftovers from the Cold War period.

For this reason, I believe that it is important for all of us to work in close co-operation, and to unify our efforts towards the same objective, which is security.

Minister Imami,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Technical Agreement we just signed today aims at disposing of around 80 tons of remaining chemical products stored in military facilities.

When completed, this project will leave Albania free of these old dangerous military chemicals. I think it is not exaggerated to say: this will be a great achievement!

Let me express again my thanks to all donor countries: Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Greece, Netherlands and Sweden, which have contributed so far.

In the best spirit of successful co-operation, let me wish all of you great success in your professional work.

Thank you very much.

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