

**Statement by H. E. Mr. Antanas Valionis
Minister of Foreign Affairs of Lithuania, at the Thirteenth Meeting
of the OSCE Ministerial Council, Ljubljana 5-6 December 2005**

Mr. Chairman,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to thank my colleague Dimitrij Rupel and his dedicated team for their impressive work in guiding our organization this year and for the cordial reception we are enjoying here in Ljubljana.

I would also like to express my full support to the statement made by the United Kingdom on behalf of the European Union.

Mr. Chairman,

Over 30 years after the Helsinki Final Act we have developed our organization on the sound foundation of shared values, principles and political commitments. The future success of the OSCE will highly depend on our abilities to maintain this foundation and build on it while responding to the security threats and challenges of today and tomorrow.

The OSCE should be strengthened, where appropriate and necessary, to enhance flexibility and effectiveness of its performance. While in this process, we have to give full account of the fact that the purpose of the OSCE is the action on substance rather than continuous reform of its working structures. In the majority of cases, political will of Participating States and their readiness to act are all that matters, and not the structures themselves.

OSCE's institutions and field missions are doing a remarkable job in assisting Participating States with implementation of their own OSCE commitments. In this regard, the autonomy and flexibility of OSCE institutions and their ability to make objective evaluations and policy recommendations remain essential.

Conflict resolution is at the core of the OSCE work. The organization has to reinforce its role in settlement of unresolved conflicts and be helpful in raising awareness of other international actors with a view to using their comparative advantage.

In this respect, the European Union's Border Assistance Mission to Moldova and Ukraine, launched several days ago, together with the expanded 5+2 negotiations format are instrumental to finding a viable and sustainable solution to the Transnistrian conflict.

We welcome the progress achieved so far with regard to withdrawal of Russian troops from Georgia, which gives us grounds to believe that it will be completed by 2008. Early fulfilment by Russia of all its 1999 Istanbul Summit commitments with regard to Georgia and Moldova would highly contribute to the settlement of the long-lasting conflicts.

Mr. Chairman,

Lithuania considers that the process of free and fair elections, in which the electorate has confidence, is vital to the development and consolidation of democracy in every country. Throughout 2006 a series of elections will be held in the OSCE area, including in our neighbour Belarus. We call upon Participating States to issue, in conformity with OSCE commitments, timely invitations to ODIHR to observe elections and to be supportive in seconding their personnel to election observation missions.

A comprehensive and cross-dimensional approach to security remains a clear asset of our organization. Regional cooperation fosters greater political cohesion within the OSCE area, as demonstrated by recent regional Summit in Kiev. It also facilitates practical cooperation in such areas as human rights, democracy, and rule of law, as well as economic development, environmental and management of borders. Better use of the potential of the economic and environmental dimension also contributes to this approach. In this regard, we support the decision by the incoming chairmanship to concentrate on transportation issues next year. At the same time we support the idea of starting a focused discussion on energy security issues.

Mr. Chairman,

Our last year's offer to serve as Chairmanship of the OSCE in 2010 is clear testimony to the high value we attach to this organization and conveys our genuine confidence in its future. I wish the incoming Belgian chairmanship the best success in 2006, and look forward to cooperating closely with it in further promoting values principles and goals of the OSCE.

Thank you.