

MC.DEL/63/08  
5 December 2008

ENGLISH  
Original: FRENCH

Delegation of Morocco

**STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF MOROCCO, AMB. OMAR  
ZNIBER, AT THE SIXTEENTH MEETING OF THE OSCE  
MINISTERIAL COUNCIL**

4 and 5 December 2008

Mr. Chairman,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a particular pleasure for me to extend my warm congratulations to the Finnish Chairmanship for the excellent organization of this sixteenth meeting of the OSCE Ministerial Council. I should like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to Spain for the specific actions taken under its Chairmanship last year, notably the Madrid Declaration on the OSCE Partners for Co-operation and the adoption of the decision on the Partnership Fund. My thanks go also to Greece, which has chaired the Mediterranean Contact Group with such energy since January 2008, and to the OSCE Secretariat for the quality of its co-operation with the partner countries.

Mr. Chairman,

The fundamental principles which inspire and guide my country's relations with the OSCE are in harmony with its immutable choices in favour of democratization illustrated by the far-reaching reforms that have been undertaken in the country at the political, economic and social level and that also include essential security considerations.

Aware of the need for its security policy to be linked as far as possible with its environment and its geographical neighbours, Morocco has therefore streamlined its efforts to achieve concrete results, specifically with its European neighbours, but also within the framework of the efforts geared towards the Maghreb.

In this connection, as you are no doubt aware, on 13 October 2008 in Luxembourg the European Union (EU) granted Morocco advanced status, which provides, in particular, for the organization of regular EU-Morocco summit meetings and the establishment of a framework agreement for Morocco's participation in European crisis management operations. Morocco and the EU also agreed on the Kingdom's participation in common European programmes carried out by certain agencies, such as the European Aviation Safety Agency, and its inclusion in several European agencies specifically concerned with security and essentially involved in combating all forms of trafficking. Provision is also being made for the institutionalization of dialogue on multilateral subjects of common interest, notably those with a security dimension.

This new status, which confirms Morocco's unique position in the Euro-Mediterranean partnership, will without any doubt give a fresh impetus to Morocco's many and varied partnerships with organizations like the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe. It encourages us to take both a critical and an ambitious look at the prospects for co-operation with the OSCE and prompts us to explore new possibilities for action in areas of common interest.

Mr. Chairman,

Allow me to illustrate by means of a few but by no means exhaustive examples the importance that my country attaches to security issues in the Mediterranean area that are of particular interest to the OSCE. Joint Morocco-EU initiatives such as the seminar "European Security and Defence Policy: dialogue between the EU and its Mediterranean partners" in Rabat on 14 March 2008 organized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Co-operation in collaboration with the European Union Institute for Security Studies in Paris is evidence of this. The EU emphasized in this regard that such initiatives constitute a valuable means of strengthening dialogue between the EU and Morocco and with other regional partners in the field of crisis management.

I should also like to mention the first co-operative venture between Morocco and the EU in the field of crisis management, namely the participation of my country in the EU's operation ALTHEA in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which sends a strong signal to the EU — as the aforementioned statement points out — and illustrates the practical support by Morocco for the development of the European Security and Defence Policy and the importance of enhanced political dialogue between Morocco and the EU through regular meetings.

Furthermore, Morocco has hosted important meetings concerned with the development and strengthening of the Euro-Med process. In this connection, I should like to re-emphasize the increasingly urgent need to make good the economic gap and the imbalances between the two shores of the Mediterranean by means of co-development, bearing in mind the impact of the financial crisis on the countries of the south and its implications for security in the Mediterranean region.

In the context of strengthening Euro-Mediterranean co-operation, I should like to reaffirm the importance that my country attaches to subregional co-operation, and particularly the establishment of a great Maghreb with which to confront together the challenges and threats to security facing our region. The year 2008 has augured well in the sense that it has been marked by a resumption of the dialogue between the EU and the Arab Maghreb Union (UMA). In this regard, a meeting between the foreign ministers of the UMA and the European Union Troika was held in Rabat on 22 January. Some very important topics were considered, including questions of interest to the OSCE — maritime security, the environment, intercultural dialogue, energy issues and desertification.

Morocco also hosted the sixth meeting of the foreign ministers of the ten countries of the western Mediterranean on 21 and 22 January, in which the Secretary General of the Arab Maghreb Union and the European Commissioner for External Relations and European Neighbourhood Policy took part for the first time.

Mr. Chairman,

This format is well established and it could be adapted to involve not only the countries of the EU or the Maghreb but also all the OSCE participating States affected by the security of the Mediterranean area and their partners, setting clear and specific goals for co-operation in areas that have been identified in recent years — migration and development, security issues, including the fight against terrorism, trafficking in human beings and other forms of criminality, the promotion of tolerance and the combating of all forms of discrimination, and naturally the economic dimension and protection of the environment.

In this regard, I should like to mention the specific efforts made by my country to implement this strategy for co-operation in accordance with the Ministerial Declaration on the OSCE Partners for Co-operation adopted in Madrid.

Among other initiatives in co-operation with the OSCE, my country hosted a seminar on 12 and 13 December 2007 to launch the Mediterranean edition of the “Handbook on Establishing Effective Labour Migration Policies” published by the OSCE in collaboration with the International Organization for Migration and the International Labour Organization. We hope that full use will be made of the Partnership Fund to ensure widespread dissemination of the manual discussed at the seminar, particularly in universities, research institutes and within all the government institutions concerned.

Mr. Chairman,

At this point, I should like to make a few comments on the OSCE’s activities in 2008 that have been of particular relevance to the partnership.

First of all, I should like to stress the importance of international co-operation in combating terrorism, especially our co-operation with the OSCE in this area.

My delegation welcomes the organization by the OSCE of seminars and workshops on maritime and inland waterway security and on travel documents, including a seminar devoted to the Mediterranean region. It draws particular attention to the efforts made by the Action against Terrorism Unit — through the choice of topics and the speakers at various seminars on this subject — to point out the danger of associating a particular religion with “terrorism”.

We also welcome the co-operation between the OSCE and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime to combat transnational organized crime.

I should like to express my gratitude to the Government of Cyprus for organizing a workshop on combating trafficking in human beings in the Mediterranean area, an event which saw the active participation of Moroccan experts.

Mr. Chairman,

Morocco expresses its appreciation for the work that the three Personal Representatives of the Chairman-in-Office for combating all forms of intolerance, against Muslims, Jews and Christians respectively, have accomplished in spite of the lack of

resources to help them carry out their mandates. It also welcomes the various activities organized by the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) in this area.

My country, which supports all initiatives aimed at promoting tolerance and interreligious dialogue and combating all forms of discrimination, has repeatedly called for co-operation between the OSCE and the Alliance of Civilizations. My delegation therefore welcomes the joint initiative of Spain and Turkey to submit a decision to the Ministerial Council on this subject.

My delegation would also like to emphasize the crucial importance of a just and lasting settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, which has gone on for an unacceptably long time, giving rise to human dramas and tension between communities that have so much in common.

I should like to reiterate Morocco's support for granting Palestine the status of Mediterranean Partner for Co-operation. My delegation believes that a positive response to the Palestinian request will send a strong signal for the establishment of the peace that we should like to see in the Mediterranean region; it will help establish a climate of confidence and will constitute an important step towards the extension of the OSCE's confidence- and security-building measures (CSBMs) to the Mediterranean partners.

Mr. Chairman,

My delegation welcomes the tangible progress made in the dialogue between the OSCE and its Mediterranean partners. The most recent illustration of this progress is the undeniable success of the Mediterranean conference held in Amman in October. It is, however, very important to recall and underscore that many recommendations made at previous Mediterranean seminars and at the recent conference deserve greater attention and concrete implementation. As was strongly emphasized by my delegation the day before yesterday at the meeting of the Troika with the Mediterranean partners, the partnership is suffering from a lack of mechanisms, however modest, to follow up and implement proposals in the identified priority areas on which broad consensus exists.

In this regard, we would like to see a strong political impetus given to the partnership and we fervently hope even more attention will be paid to this question during the important events taking place within the OSCE in 2009, whether it be the planned organization of an OSCE summit or a meeting of the Quintet with the Mediterranean partners at the ministerial level. At all events, my country will continue to contribute through its ideas and proposals to strengthening the Mediterranean dimension of the OSCE.