

OSCE Ministerial Council, 4 - 5 December, 2008, Helsinki

**Statement by H.E. Per Stig Møller
Minister of Foreign Affairs of Denmark**

Mr Chairman,

First let me express my full support for the statement made by France on behalf of the European Union.

Mr Chairman,

The gathering of the OSCE Ministerial Council in Helsinki marks a return to the place where an important milestone was set to promote peace, security and cooperation in Europe. Considering the political context, at the time the Helsinki Final Act was adopted, it was quite remarkable and visionary that it encompassed a broad and comprehensive concept of security, which included both the politico-military, economic and environmental as well as the human dimension aspect of security.

As we are now gathered again in Helsinki, it is tempting to say that the cycle has been completed, as we have returned to where the original commitments were made to honour the standards and fundamental principles of the Helsinki Final Act. Yet, there is still a need to reaffirm and deepen our commitment to the OSCE standards and, not least, to focus on their implementation.

Mr. Chairman,

The Ministerial Council in Helsinki also marks the completion of the Finnish Chairmanship which has skilfully and professionally managed these turbulent past months. I would like in this connection to emphasise the Finnish Chairmanship's swift actions to help stabilise the situation on the ground in Georgia by working for the rapid deployment of additional OSCE monitors.

Mr. Chairman,

The field missions are one of the core competencies and comparative advantages of the OSCE. The OSCE Mission to Georgia is of particular significance. It is therefore of immense importance that the OSCE participating States are able to quickly reach a consensus on the mandate of the Mission to Georgia with a view, inter alia, to continuing and expanding the monitoring activities on the ground. In this context, OSCE monitors should be ensured unhindered access to South Ossetia. Also, it must be stressed that the future mandate of the Mission must respect the territorial integrity of Georgia, as enshrined in the Helsinki Final Act.

Another OSCE Field Mission of particular importance is the OSCE Mission to Kosovo. Denmark has had a long-term commitment to the stabilisation and further development of the Western Balkans. During the past year, historical events have created a solid foundation for the development and stabilisation of Kosovo. These events require all international actors on the ground to adjust their presence in Kosovo to the new realities. This also includes the OSCE Mission to Kosovo. The Mission has so far played an important role in the promotion of rule of law, democratization, institution and capacity building, police training and human rights protection. Due to the Mission's extensive presence throughout Kosovo it now has a particular role to play, especially in the field of democratisation at community level and the protection minority rights.

Mr. Chairman,

We all share a common interest in enhancing security in Europe. Denmark believes that existing structures, including the OSCE, the EU and NATO, already offer a good and solid architecture for peace and stability in Europe. Denmark does not see a need for new structures. That does not mean, however, that we should not discuss how to strengthen the current framework. In fact, we believe that an ongoing discussion on this issue within the existing structures could contribute positively to the stability and security in Europe. Denmark finds that the OSCE would be an appropriate forum to discuss concrete ideas and proposals.

Mr. Chairman,

10 December 2008 marks the 60-anniversary of the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights by the UN General Assembly. The Declaration has been of paramount importance for promoting human rights. Today, our societies are based on the democratic values and the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms that were first enshrined in the UN Declaration.

However, even 60 years after the Declaration's adoption violations of human rights still occur worldwide. The Declaration therefore remains as relevant today as at the time of its adoption in 1948.

Respect for human rights is closely interlinked with and contributes to the promotion of international peace and stability, as it allows for open and frank dialogue nationally and internationally. Open and frank dialogue, however, can only take place if all parties do enjoy essential human rights such as freedom of expression and freedom of religion. The role of human rights defenders must be mentioned in this context, as they in many cases put their personal security at risk in the struggle to ensure the protection of and the respect for human rights for all.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights has also strongly influenced the work and the standard-setting of the OSCE as well as the OSCE efforts to ensure respect for and implementation of these obligations. Denmark therefore strongly welcomes a Ministerial Declaration on Human Rights to mark the 60th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Mr. Chairman,

The commitment to promote peace and stability constitutes the corner stone of the OSCE. Accordingly, Denmark welcomes the OSCE initiative to promote regional security in Central Asia through the provision of support to border security between the borders of the Central Asian OSCE participating States and Afghanistan. Arms and drug smuggling constitutes a security threat to the individual countries of the region and to the region as a whole. Cross border crime, including trafficking in human beings, needs to be addressed in a concerted manner by all countries involved. Denmark therefore fully supports the proposal by the OSCE Secretary General to undertake supportive OSCE projects on Afghan territory parallel to the projects within the Central Asian participating States of the OSCE in order to improve security and ensure long-term stability in the region.

Mr Chairman,

I should like to acknowledge the positive steps taken by Kazakhstan to implement their Madrid commitments. That said, some of the commitments have yet to be fulfilled. Denmark therefore wishes to reiterate its readiness to provide assistance to the Government of Kazakhstan with a view to facilitating the implementation of the commitments undertaken by Kazakhstan in Madrid.

Mr. Chairman,

In closing, I would like to thank our Chairman-in-Office, Foreign Minister Alexander Stubb, for all his tireless efforts over the past year in leading the OSCE and for the hospitality of the Finnish Chairmanship. I would also like to assure the incoming Greek Chairmanship of our full support and cooperation in the year to come.

Thank you, Mr Chairman