

OSCE Ministerial Council, 1 - 2 December, 2009, Athens

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

Mr. Chairman,

Today's OSCE meeting in Athens marks a return to the birthplace of democracy. Democracy is closely connected to international peace and security, because it allows an open and frank dialogue nationally and internationally. The OSCE with its comprehensive security concept and its broad membership is an essential tool in this regard.

Mr. Chairman,

A free and fair election process and a vibrant civil society will remain at the heart of any well-functioning democracy. Therefore, it must also remain at the heart of the work undertaken by the OSCE. I would like to underline Denmark's appreciation of the significant and valuable contribution that ODIHR is making to enhance the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. We greatly value the work ODIHR is doing in the crucial area of election observation. The independence and impartiality of ODIHR must be protected. The common efforts of ODIHR and the Parliamentary Assembly constitute the backbone of OSCE's observation activities and we are pleased to

note the good working relationship between ODIHR and the Parliamentary Assembly recently.

An open and critical dialogue with civil society is the oxygen that keeps democratic societies breathing. Consequently, Denmark remains firmly committed to full NGO participation in OSCE events.

In 2010, Denmark will be hosting an OSCE conference in cooperation with the Kazakh chairmanship to mark the 20 year anniversary of the Copenhagen Document on the OSCE's Human Dimension. The aim of the conference will be to discuss the implementation of the Copenhagen Document. To what extent have commitments been turned into reality? And what can be done to improve implementation? The implementation of the OSCE commitments on human rights is of paramount importance as they have not yet been secured in all our Participating States. We must be open to each other about this.

Therefore, Denmark remains deeply concerned about the recent incidents of violence and intimidations of journalists and human rights advocates in parts of the OSCE region, particularly in Azerbaijan, Kirgistan and Russia. Denmark would like to reiterate the call for all relevant parties to secure freedom of the media and the right to freedom of expression.

Mr. Chairman,

The debate on European security architecture and the Corfu process is proof of the increased importance of the OSCE. Interesting proposals on how to strengthen and update OSCE commitments have been put forward. A growing consensus would like to see more focus on new security threats, including human trafficking, drugs smuggling, energy security climate change and not least terrorism. During my recent visit to Tajikistan and the border to Afghanistan, I saw clear proof of the very important work of the OSCE concerning border management which is crucial for countering real threats in the region. It will be important if OSCE could do more, not the least inside Afghanistan.

I wish to thank the Greek chairmanship for skilfully bringing the Corfu agenda forward. It is important to listen carefully to those who believe that their security concerns are not met. This is the very nature of cooperative security. Hopefully, the process can contribute to increased confidence between OSCE's Participating States and also give impetus to solving the CFE-treaty crisis. Denmark welcomes the Corfu process based on a broad and comprehensive security concept, which includes both the political, military, economic and

environmental aspects as well as the human dimension of security. The OSCE is the right forum to use in our search for such an approach.

We should not focus on replacing or reinventing the existing European security architecture but on how to make it work better. Hopefully, the process will lead to results, also regarding the so-called protracted conflicts. Results, which could form the basis for decisions by the OSCE Heads of State and Government. We have yet to see whether such a point will be reached already in 2010.

Mr. Chairman,

OSCE was created to avoid armed conflicts, but the unresolved territorial conflicts in the South Caucasus remain a grave concern. A solution to the protracted conflicts is of immense importance to the security and stability of the whole OSCE area. A renewed OSCE presence in Georgia should lead to OSCE monitors gaining unhindered access to South Ossetia and Abkhazia.

Mr. Chairman,

Next week the world will gather for the climate conference in Copenhagen. The security implications of climate change are real and require urgent action. Climate change, if left unchecked, will intensify and multiply existing security threats. The OSCE has considerable experience in dealing with security

implications of environmental issues in the OSCE area. This role must be continued and strengthened. In Copenhagen, there will be a side event on climate change and security.

Denmark looks forward to working with Kazakhstan as OSCE Chairman-in-Office next year and can assure Kazakhstan of our full support and cooperation. I hope that the chairmanship will be useful both for the OSCE and for the continued reform process in Kazakhstan and in the region in general.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman