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**STATEMENT BY MR. SERGEI LAVROV, MINISTER FOR
FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,
AT THE CLOSURE OF THE THIRTEENTH MEETING
OF THE OSCE MINISTERIAL COUNCIL**

Ljubljana, 6 December 2005

Mr. Chairman,

We are grateful to you for your ceaseless efforts and the efforts of all the members of your team which, along with our excellent working conditions, made it possible to achieve substantial results and to adopt quite a number of important documents.

To be sure, not all of the serious problems which are causing concern to many today, which directly affect the OSCE's sphere of activity and which feature prominently in reports by the international media, have been reflected in our set of decisions. But we were acting in accordance with the principle of consensus and believe that the result achieved is an entirely worthy one.

I should like to single out in particular the decision on reform. With regard to this decision, as with regard to our other documents, the Russian delegation has no interpretative statement to make. We supported what was written in these documents and our position is adequately reflected in the consensus reached.

In their concluding comments, a number of our colleagues felt it necessary to touch on subjects that were not reflected in our decisions and on which, accordingly, no consensus has been reached. I should like to say a few words about the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE Treaty). I might recall something which we not only discussed with our colleagues during the negotiations over the last two days, but which we have also confirmed in documents, namely that the Russian Federation has fulfilled without exception all of its commitments related to the CFE Treaty. We trust that the relevant commitments of all the other countries, notably the commitment adopted at the level of Heads of State to ratify as soon as possible the adapted CFE Treaty (so far only four participating States have done so), will be fulfilled in the near future. All the more so, since the pretexts for not doing this are diminishing.

Our thanks, of course, go also to those who have expressed kind words regarding the consensus reached on the Ministerial Council document on Georgia. Certainly, we are pleased with this as are our Georgian colleagues. But we are doing this as part of our bilateral agreements and assure all those who are sympathetic that we are implementing these agreements, as arranged, directly in a bilateral format.

It is a pity that it proved impossible to reach consensus on the document on Moldova. A number of our colleagues insisted on formulations that simply contradicted the facts. They proposed, for example, supporting solutions which rule out the possibility of an agreement being reached between the Government of Moldova and Transdniestria and which call for a settlement to be sought without the involvement of Transdniestria, something which in general was criticized quite recently by many in the capitals of the States present here. But, let me repeat this, if everyone fulfils their commitments, I believe it will be possible to make progress in dealing with this problem, too.

It is also a pity that the document on Kosovo was not adopted, because the OSCE plays and, we are convinced, will continue to play an important role in the common efforts of the international community under the auspices of the United Nations to settle this extremely difficult conflict with its serious consequences. One of the main reasons why it proved impossible to adopt this document was the refusal of some delegations to back up our common adherence to the Helsinki Final Act. This seems to be quite a worrying symptom to me.

In conclusion, I should like to say that the decisions we have approved today set out a clear path for reforming and strengthening the OSCE.

Once again, I should like to congratulate you, Mr. Chairman, from the heart. I believe that you can indeed be genuinely satisfied with and proud of the work that has been accomplished. Today, we have done a great deal to strengthen the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe.