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MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND HEAD OF THE KYRGYZ
DELEGATION, AT THE THIRTEENTH MEETING
OF THE OSCE MINISTERIAL COUNCIL**

Ljubljana, Slovenia, 5 December 2005

Mr. Chairman,
Distinguished colleagues,

The present meeting of the OSCE Ministerial Council is taking place at a truly historic time. Thirty years after the signing of the Helsinki Final Act, it is time for the OSCE to reconsider its activities in a dynamically changing world, for this is also a time when new priorities and views are emerging as regards efforts to deal with contemporary threats and challenges.

Clear understanding of the close interrelationship and interdependence of the three dimensions — politico-military, economic/environmental and human — underlying the OSCE has been an indispensable condition for the great importance of this Organization for many decades. Any departure from this balanced and comprehensive approach to maintaining security would destroy the foundations on which the entire philosophy of the Organization is based.

Unfortunately, we see that recently the Organization's work has in fact been marked by such a departure, which takes the form of a clear imbalance between the three components of the OSCE.

We need to restore this balance if we want the OSCE to be a sustainable and authoritative organization, and we understand that in order to do this it is necessary to improve a number of aspects of its work so that the Organization can occupy its rightful place in Europe's modern security architecture. This concerns both questions of security and economic development and also, quite naturally, the human dimension of the OSCE's activities.

In the OSCE family we have more and more frequently been hearing well-founded calls for a return to the balanced formula for the Organization's activities. In that connection, the report of the Panel of Eminent Persons identifies for us the overall goal of restoring the OSCE to its original and basic function, namely to serve as a forum for political dialogue on the basis of equal rights and the adoption of decisions on the most important problems concerning security in Europe. In that connection, particular emphasis needs to be placed on

strengthening our Organization's efforts to counter international terrorism and eradicate its deep-seated causes.

I am certain no one doubts that comprehensive reform of the OSCE has come to be of vital importance for all its participating States. The OSCE was created to solve problems that concern all its participating States. In order to do this, it is necessary to adapt its political agenda to the contemporary threats and challenges.

Our country attaches great political importance to its involvement in the work of the OSCE. For us, this means fostering full-scale entry into the pan-European space and the use of the Organization's mechanisms to ensure and protect national and regional interests as well as the possibility of strengthening and stepping up fruitful and mutually beneficial co-operation with the leading countries of the world both at a multilateral and at a bilateral level.

At the same time, an analysis of the OSCE's activities in the Republic has shown a need for a more varied involvement of the Organization in the life of the Kyrgyz people and in other countries in the OSCE area. In our view, the Organization should assist participating States in keeping with their interests, co-ordinate its activities more carefully with the needs of the host country and take into account the real state of affairs, the specific features of the region and the fact that its work should be carried out at the request and upon the initiative of the host country.

At present, Kyrgyzstan finds itself in a process of transition and is endeavouring to eliminate the defects of the previous regime and dismantle the vicious system established by it. The popular revolution of 24 March and the presidential elections in July of this year, as was noted by observers from the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, were conducted in a democratic and open fashion and created a stable political basis for the further democratic development of the country.

The new Kyrgyz Government has an important task ahead of it — that of accelerating economic upturn, increasing the prosperity of the country's population and strengthening stability. It is after all the low standard of living of the population, poverty, corruption and crime that present the greatest danger to the Republic's stability and security. We wholeheartedly hope that we will receive support and assistance from the entire international community and the OSCE in this matter.

It seems to me that the OSCE might focus its practical assistance on supporting our efforts to place greater emphasis on the implementation of economic and environmental projects in Kyrgyzstan. If in the not too distant future the OSCE Centre in Bishkek could be accorded a new pilot status as co-ordinator of projects in the political, economic and human dimensions, this might also be an important step in that direction. In this way, we would have an opportunity to pay equal attention to all three integral and interdependent parts of the OSCE's work.

Our initiative should not be regarded as an attempt to reduce the importance of co-operation with the OSCE or to curtail the Organization's activities in Kyrgyzstan. Our country intends to continue to co-operate both intensively and extensively with the OSCE to promote democracy and human rights as part of the OSCE Work Plan for Kyrgyzstan adopted in the spring of this year.

By the same token, the Kyrgyz Republic has no intention of reducing its level of co-operation with the OSCE in the political and humanitarian areas, but is merely counting on the OSCE to make a more active contribution to the implementation of economic and environmental projects throughout the Republic. This step would have an important psychological effect, increasing the authority of the Organization among ordinary citizens in Kyrgyzstan and demonstrating throughout the country as a whole and in the individual regions the practical aspect of the idea of reforming the OSCE.

In that connection, we are in favour of changing the status of the OSCE Centre not simply to that of a traditional OSCE structure involving a co-ordinator of projects in the economic and environmental dimensions, but also the political and human dimensions, something which would reflect the balanced approach of our country to co-operation with the OSCE and would make a specific contribution to the reform of the Organization.

Having taken this initiative, we nevertheless adopted a decision to extend temporarily the current mandate of the OSCE Centre, meeting the requests of our western partners half-way to continue consultations on this matter and taking into account the high level of co-operation between Kyrgyzstan and the OSCE.

Nevertheless, in view of the factors I have outlined above, we believe it important and essential that the OSCE Centre in Bishkek should substantially increase its work in the economic and environmental dimensions right away. In that connection, we believe it would be useful to devote greater financial resources not to expanding the number of personnel of OSCE field offices in Kyrgyzstan or to holding numerous and frequently ineffective seminars and conferences, but rather to implementing specific and effective projects in the economic and environmental areas. I believe that precisely this approach will create all the necessary prerequisites for further fruitful co-operation between Kyrgyzstan and the OSCE. We hope that the OSCE countries will support our proposals.

In concluding my statement, allow me to emphasize once more that our initiative is directed towards a comprehensive strengthening of the OSCE and its image through constructive dialogue on the basis of equal rights and through identifying long-term priorities for activities in Kyrgyzstan in keeping with our country's needs.

In conclusion, I should like to thank the Slovenian Chairmanship for the finely-tuned organization of this event and also for the warm welcome and hospitality we have received.

Thank you for your attention.