



**PERMANENT DELEGATION
OF NORWAY TO THE OSCE**

STATEMENT IN RESPONSE TO H. E. Mrs. DORA BAKOYANNIS,
MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF GREECE

As delivered by Ambassador Guttorm Vik
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
15 January 2009

Madam Chairperson,

Let me first echo the remarks of previous speakers, by expressing a warm welcome to the new Chairperson in Office, H.E. Mrs. Dora Bakoyannis, by thanking her for the thoughtful and stimulating presentation of the priorities of the Greek Chair, and by pledging my delegation's full support to the Chair in the discharge of its important and challenging tasks.

Let me also pay a sincere tribute to the outgoing Finnish Chair, that had to face up to unexpected and exceptional challenges, and did what could be done to meet them, always seeking to exploit to the maximum all possibilities for positive OSCE contributions.

We welcome the new Chair's stated intentions to continue along the same path, in an effort to fully exploit the potential of the OSCE for conflict prevention and conflict resolution, and, in the longer term, to promote our common, indivisible, cooperative and cross-dimensional security, borrowing a term from the Chairperson's introduction.

Madam Chairperson,

The conflict in Georgia will loom large on the OSCE agenda also in 2009, both as regards the urgent problems of alleviating the situation for the suffering affected populations, and in relation to the longer-term task of promoting and safeguarding peace and stability in the area, with full respect for OSCE principles and values. The OSCE and its institutions will have important roles to play in all these fields, e.g. through the participation of the CiO in the negotiations in Geneva, the hopefully continued and strengthened role of the Military Monitors, the efforts of ODIHR and HCNM to promote respect for Human Rights and the rights of minorities, and the continued work of the OSCE Mission in Georgia, promoting the further positive development of Georgian society and institutions, in close partnership with the host country. We supported the "package proposal" launched by the Finnish chair for a continued OSCE presence, and we support the revised concepts now being pursued by the Greek chair. We were very disappointed when Russia could not join consensus on the outgoing Chair's proposal for a temporary solution of prolonging the existing mandate of the Mission in Georgia for three months, in order to give the necessary time to find a longer-term

solution in an orderly manner. It is our impression that there is no fundamental disagreement that the OSCE still **has** important tasks to tend to in Georgia, many of them even more urgent in light of the present circumstances. Accordingly, we will vigorously support all efforts to use the grace period required for the possible closing of the Mission to find a solution for a robust, much needed OSCE presence in Georgia.

Madam Chairperson,

One of the highlights of Helsinki was the frank and open dialogue on the future of European security, which was the theme for the Ministers' working lunch, and for many comments in the official debate. We warmly welcome the stated intention of the Greek Chairmanship to vigorously pursue this all-important dialogue in its proper forum, the OSCE, and we look forward to concrete proposals on timing and modalities for the further discussions. Let me in this context also concur with the importance of resolving the deadlock on the CFE Treaty, by resuming and reinvigorating discussions on the Parallel Action Plan, in order to allow for a speedy entry into force of the Adapted CFE.

Another important and very welcome result of the Helsinki Ministerial was the adoption of the Ministerial declaration on the occasion on the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, reaffirming and strengthening some of the most important common principles and values of our organisation. Let me stress the importance of the OSCE as a forum for peer review of our implementation of these principles and obligations and recall our solemn, reiterated agreement to the effect that concerns expressed about the human rights situation in other participating countries are not to be interpreted as undue interference in internal affairs. We also welcome the emphasis given to further efforts to promote the rule of law in the Chair's presentation.

Time does not allow any highlighting of more than a few priority themes and issues, but my delegation is happy to broadly share the ambitions and priorities outlined in Minister Bakoyannis' statement, as well as by some previous speakers, notably the EU.

Finally, Madam Chairperson,

There can be no doubt that the OSCE, with its trademark concept of comprehensive security, is as relevant and potentially useful as ever before. Let us agree to put it to even better use in this year 2009, to the benefit of all our countries and peoples.