



**SPEECH**  
**BY THE SPANISH MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND COOPERATION**  
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**Permanent Council of the OSCE**

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**Ambassadors,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

**I am addressing this Permanent Council for the first time as Chairman-in-Office of the OSCE, and do so with divided feelings:**

**In the first place, one of satisfaction,** because there is no other organization like the OSCE on the world scene. It is neither a military alliance nor an economic union, but an Organization that brings together, on a permanent basis, fifty-six countries sharing a common view of a Europe that is secure, united, free and at peace with itself. It came into being in Helsinki, was consolidated in Paris, Moscow, Budapest and Istanbul, and today we continue making a reality of this vision by means of our everyday interaction within this Organization.

The changes that have taken place over the last thirty two years throughout the OSCE area, within our States and within our societies, have reached historic dimensions. We should be proud of the extraordinary advances that have been achieved

**But, on the other hand, our pride should be temperate and prudent,** out of an elementary sense of responsibility: we should judiciously analyse our current difficulties and face future challenges directly and clear-sightedly.



We have to work hand in hand if we wish future generations to view us as we would like to be seen. If our children cannot be proud of us tomorrow, then we shall have failed in our collective endeavour, for not having attained that shared vision.

As the incoming Chairman-in-Office, I would like to thank Minister Karel de Gucht and all the team of the Belgian Chairmanship for the work they did during 2006, and to express our appreciation of the determination and skill with which Belgium held the OSCE helm.

Belgium received a complex inheritance from the Ljubljana Ministerial Council. In the political sphere, the political tensions of 2005 had to be overcome. Moreover, it had to carry out the delicate task of putting into practice the reform programme needed to enhance the effectiveness of the OSCE. An outstanding success was obtained in both respects. The decisions taken in Brussels have established clear-cut guidelines for our work together in 2007.

Ambassadors,

**In the spirit of clarity and moderation I referred to a moment ago, I note that our current situation is not an easy one. The Participating States and the OSCE itself are passing through a complicated stage:**

- It is a fact that the wars in the Balkans appear to have ended; but there remains, to a very considerable extent, the arduous task of reestablishing regional stability and of creating 'virtuous circles' to sustain the States in the area. We have made great progress in resolving the disputes that beset the former Yugoslavia, but much must still be done to reinforce coexistence, the democratic institutions and the rule of law in some parts of the region.

The question of Kosovo will occupy centre stage during 2007. As Chairman-in-Office, I wish to stress the commitment to maintain the presence of the OSCE there, on the ground. We must carry on supporting the efforts being made there to construct a society that is structured, multiethnic and tolerant, one that is



committed to respect for human rights and to democratic institutions. Spain considers it fundamental that due recognition should be given to the added value provided by the OSCE, in the sense of its widespread presence in the field and its irreplaceable support for the institution of the rule of law, and that an appropriate legal fabric should be encountered for its future presence.

- The democratic transition of many States in the OSCE area is passing through a difficult moment, and the process can by no means be considered to be complete. We should not be surprised by this: democracy cannot be imposed from outside, nor does it appear overnight. The institution of democracy takes times and requires patience and perseverance, as well as a favourable international setting. We must sustain, with greater determination than ever, our undertaking to uphold and accompany these processes in order to ensure their peaceful development.
- Furthermore, it is quite clear that the OSCE will continue having a role to play concerning the **long-running conflicts** within its area that are still in existence. Our participation must be aimed at healing the breach between those involved in such disputes, bringing together communities and peoples whose destinies have been joined, and enhancing relations between the societies on both shores of the Dniester, in Georgia and in Nagorno-Karabakh. In each of these disputes walls have been built up, dividing peoples, and these walls must be torn down. To achieve a sustainable solution, we must intervene *now* to provide a solid basis for progress.
- I am profoundly concerned that the **relations between some Participating States** continue to be strained. Neither the spirit nor the letter of the OSCE commitments are enhanced when relations between Participating States are characterised by sanctions, pressure or aggressive rhetoric. We must regain mutual trust, and for this purpose let us appeal to the moderation and goodwill of the Parties and to the firm resolve of all of us participating in the OSCE.



- It must be recognised that sometimes **the consensus on values and their practical implementation** seems to weaken. As Participating States, we must be capable of doing more in fulfilling our undertakings and putting them into practice in an effective manner. The issue is a simple one: the extreme complexity of the challenges facing us in these turbulent times means that our promises will be hollow if they fail to achieve results in practice, and it is these very promises that constitute the foundations on which the OSCE rests.
- The difficulties facing us do not reside merely in the relations among States. Within each nation, **our societies are ever more diverse** and are threatened by intolerance, discrimination and even hatred. Spain will seek to make intense use of the institutions, mechanisms and activities available to the OSCE in order to respond as effectively as possible to the need to reconcile the diversity of our plural societies in a democratic way, one that obtains the participation of all concerned. This mission must have a strategic outreach.
- Nowadays, **the threats and challenges to our security are asymmetric, complex, dynamic and cross-border in nature**. In order to address them, the OSCE must continue its efforts to create a more solid dialogue and stronger cooperation among its Members and with the OSCE's partner organizations, such as the EU, NATO, the UN and the Council of Europe, without overlooking other institutions and initiatives both within and without the OSCE area.
- **The OSCE does not exist in isolation** within its immediate surroundings. We cannot guarantee our own security while ignoring the monumental transformations that are taking place among our neighbours in the Mediterranean region, in sub-Saharan Africa, in the Middle East and in East Asia. In today's interconnected world, the security of the OSCE must sink its roots not only within its own space but also further afield, and especially toward the South and the East. This is why our relations with our Mediterranean and Asian partners are highly valuable, their dialogue with the OSCE providing a security outlook that goes beyond that of our own region, and is one that we believe should be intensified and reinforced.



- Finally, **the situation within our organisation itself** is not an easy one. As the Secretary General remarked, the realities of the “zero growth” of the budget impose upon us all the responsibility to choose, both among priorities and among the activities in which we decide to participate. We must not shrink from choosing what seems necessary for the effectiveness of the Organization.

## Ladies and Gentlemen

### What does all this mean?

- Above all, that **Project Europe is still unfinished**. At the outset, the OSCE was intended to make Europe a space of peace, security, freedom and cooperation, with all ideological confrontations overcome. We still have to continue working to this goal.
- **We must reconsider the premises of the 1990s**. Within the OSCE area, in the short term, it is quite possible that the favourable circumstances that saw them emerge may not reoccur. The creation of a secure Europe, living in peace, continues to be a long and arduous process, requiring sustained effort and a permanent debate on its values and on how they should be applied. The key to success lies in maintaining our momentum and advancing in the right direction, taking into account our ultimate objective, which continues to be the one originally formulated.
- **New challenges to our security** constitute a clarion call for our actions to be based upon shared values, for us to strengthen and enhance the series of undertakings we have jointly made.
- All these factors mean **the OSCE is as necessary today as before**. We are aware that times are not easy. But for this very reason our Organization is so necessary. As we move forward in unison to address common problems, we must bear in mind the vision that inspired the creation of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe – CSCE. Our States and societies need a



forum in which our differences can be shared rather than aggravated, in which dialogue is enhanced rather than neglected, and in which we act in response to common necessities. Such a forum is that constituted by the OSCE.

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In conducting the Chairmanship, **three principles will shape and direct our efforts: Priority, Perseverance and Patience.**

- **Priorities** – The OSCE surely cannot do everything well; but it can certainly do some things very well. Let us establish our priorities bearing in mind the global and balanced security perspective which is the essence of this organization.
- **Perseverance** – This is required in order to fulfil the commitments given and to define new ones that respond to emerging problems; perseverance in our good mutual relations and in our commitment to the Organization. For the OSCE to function correctly, each of the Participating States' perseverance in political commitments is indispensable.
- **Patience** – Security cannot be achieved in a single, definitive effort. All the commitments cannot be effectively fulfilled by means of a single decision. Security, like democracy, cannot be built in haste, but with patience, perseverance and a clear definition of priorities.

In fact, patience and perseverance are two of the virtues possessed by **Josep Borrell**. You are already aware of his lucid intelligence, his vocation for public service, his unblemished democratic record and his ample international experience. This 15<sup>th</sup> January his mandate as President of the European Parliament will conclude. I am greatly satisfied and honoured to announce here today that I have requested Josep Borrell to become be my Special Envoy during the Spanish Chairmanship for whatever missions and objectives are required. I sincerely could not count on a more qualified collaborator and I am very grateful for his readiness and generosity.

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,



**The Spanish priorities for 2007** are based on a carefully-thought analysis of the threats and challenges envisaged in the *Maastricht Strategy for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, challenges which demand a balanced response.

In this context, I will firstly mention **prolonged conflicts**. Unfortunately, they are still on “the debit side” of our organization. Spain is resolved to pay most particular attention to them, because they are a breeding ground for instability and insecurity and can once again generate even further-reaching conflicts for our region; and also because they constitute deplorable examples that contradict the commitments given by all of us.

We take on this responsibility with realism and pragmatism: we believe that our best contribution will be persevering in the work already initiated by the OSCE and dedicating our best efforts to building bridges that will enable progress in understanding between the conflicting parties; reducing the tension that in some cases, unfortunately, has revived in recent months; facilitating contacts and frank and sincere dialogue among the principal players; contributing to the development of effective confidence measures that will enable the parties to understand how close they are to each other, and how much they depend on mutual understanding; and preventing there from being further victims. We want to be facilitators and amicable compounders. No more, no less. But nothing can replace the will and political courage of the directly interested parties. All the people in these areas, all of them, long for peace, prosperity, the possibility of free interaction and trade, and the development of a democratic, stable society.

I do not wish to make any promises or announcements here. This year, Spain will strive to persevere in its efforts to bring the parties closer and to continue to remind everyone of the principles and commitments which must be at the base of our coexistence, our peace and our security. We will continue, in short, seeking to prepare the ground in the hope that in a year’s time tension will be reduced and there will be a more favourable climate for advancing towards an effective solution to these conflicts. We are very sure of our ultimate objective and we will spare no efforts to bring it closer.

The above considerations lead me to highlight one of the principal characteristics and goals of the Spanish Chairmanship: the development and intensification of the nature



and capacity of **the OSCE as a forum for dialogue and cooperation**. This is the true dimension underpinning our organization's reason for existence: enabling us to overcome our problems.

But dialogue is not an end in itself: it is the most civilized instrument to resolve or overcome differences. And at the OSCE we have been able not only to reinforce the enormous legacy of the CSCE in this context, but also to develop new bases for such dialogue. We have consolidated our principles and standards, and we have made democracy, the defence of human rights and absolute respect for the rule of law the pillars on which our security must be based.

Not all the OSCE Member States are at the same stage of development, nor in the same historical, political or geographical contexts. But we have all undoubtedly had the same intuition and today we are all united by the same democratic aspirations. Indeed, a frank and sincere, thorough and constant dialogue will enable us to jointly continue developing our values. Dialogue is today, once again, and leaving behind the euphoria of the 90s, necessary and indispensable.

Spain wishes to apply this principle to the three dimensions of the OSCE, in a balanced way and making the most of their potential.

More specifically, in the **politico-military sphere**:

- we intend to improve the synergy between the Permanent Council and the Forum for Security Cooperation;
- we consider it important to continue conducting debates within the OSCE concerning civil and military cooperation in emergency situations;
- we will place emphasis on the fight against terrorism. Our work in 2007 will progress on several fronts: improving legal cooperation regarding criminal affairs in order to put an end to terrorism and reinforcing security concerning travel documents;
- we will dedicate our best efforts to ensuring the success of the high-level conference on the integration of civil society in the fight against terrorism;





- we will promote the protection and due recognition of the victims of terrorism.

**In the economic and environmental sphere**, we base our thinking on this premise: the OSCE can and must play a more relevant role in the economic and environmental activities that are necessary for our peace and security. Therefore:

- Spain will, firstly, seek to extend the scope of the OSCE activities concerning environmental security;
- we will endeavour to raise awareness of the fact that soil degradation and contamination constitutes a severe threat to our collective security;
- we will also emphasize the need to manage water use rationally and effectively and to provide the OSCE with a more active role in this field, which is so crucial to our future;
- precisely for this reason, Spain is looking forward to welcoming everyone with open arms in Zaragoza next 12 and 13 March for the second preparatory conference for the 2007 OSCE Economic Forum. We have chosen to host this meeting in our own country and especially in the city of Zaragoza, venue of the 2008 Expo on “Water and Sustainable Development”, in order to intensify our contribution to such an important issue and to highlight the role that the OSCE can play in the global context with respect to water management.

**As for the human dimension**, since the early 90s, with the Copenhagen Document, we have strived to consolidate and reinforce our commitments to democracy, the rule of law and respect for human rights. This is a legacy that cannot be waived, that we must preserve and that will receive full attention on Spain’s part. The “Common Responsibility” Report, submitted by the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights to the Brussels Ministerial Council, offers us a new instrument on which we can restate our political will to meet the commitments given.

In this dimension, we also intend to give priority to activities aimed at promoting greater participation and diversity in our ever more plural societies. This issue affects us



all equally and is at the centre of our determination to build democratic societies and States. Nowadays, diversity is a fact in all our societies; our goal must be to achieve the intense participation of all their members in democratic processes.

We will make whatever efforts are possible to continue to fight against intolerance, discrimination and the trafficking in human beings; to improve transparency and democratic processes; and to promote the creation of societies where a veritable rule of law prevails. This is the only way we can protect our citizens and make our social organization meaningful.

- We commend the holding of a High-Level OSCE Conference on the fight against discrimination and the promotion of mutual respect and understanding, which will take place in the first half of this year in Bucharest, as a follow-up to the Córdoba Conference on Anti-Semitism and Other Forms of Intolerance.
- Furthermore, we intend to organize, in Córdoba and during the second half, a conference on intolerance towards Muslims, a problem which is becoming alarming, as we have just been warned by the European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia.
- Young people are key to achieving healthy diversity. Spain will organize, before the Madrid Ministerial, a youth event that will focus on the fight against intolerance and on promoting mutual respect and understanding, as well as on raising youth awareness of the values and principles that unite us.
- Spain will seek to promote the sharing of experiences and good practice between the OSCE Participating States and the Mediterranean partners, concerning fostering tolerance and managing multi-ethnic societies.

I will now refer to the OSCE's **Mediterranean and Asian partners** for cooperation. In recent years significant progress has been made in this field. Spain is a Mediterranean country, therefore it will not be a real surprise for you if I remind our special sensitivity towards this region. We all need to count on it when we have to respond appropriately to the challenges which we anyway share. Challenges which affect all dimensions of security. In 2006 Spain has chaired the Contact Group with the Mediterranean and this



occasion provided us the chance to become a privileged witness of their demands to cross over from the field of recommendations to that of implementation. Therefore, during this Chairmanship we will seek to encourage these relations by means of more specific activities that give greater meaning to the statute of cooperation partners, within the varied possibilities offered by the OSCE.

We will seek to revive interest among the already existing partners, and we will study the possibility of including new partners in the future.

We will bear in mind the regional and global security architecture of which the OSCE is a part. We will strive to continue cooperation with the partner associations of the OSCE area and of other spheres, to ensure that our mutual evolution continues to adapt to the ever-changing nature of modern threats to security. The UN **Alliance of Civilizations** initiative is a good example: the OSCE can contribute in this field with an invaluable regional perspective and contribution.

Spain considers it important for the OSCE to intensify its dialogue with partner organizations, namely the EU, the UN, the Council of Europe and NATO, as well as with other organizations and cooperation process, inside and outside of its area, and particularly in the Euro-Asian sphere: to achieve greater international cooperation and coordination; to prevent overlapping of activities; and to achieve synergies.

Finally, the Spanish Chairmanship hopes that on the occasion of the Madrid Ministerial Council it will be possible to announce future Chairmanships of our Organization including Kazakhstan.

Ambassadors,

The OSCE is a powerful but delicate political instrument. Given its genesis and evolution, it could be considered a mirror that reflects the tensions of all kinds rippling throughout Europe today. And mirrors are fragile.

I am convinced that it is a key element in responding to the challenges we face. It is still **the** forum for raising key questions and issues concerning the future of Europe; concerning shared values; concerning the full implementation of the commitments



agreed upon by our 56 States; concerning how to address new problems regarding security and to continue to resolve those that are long-standing.

Today, on succeeding Belgium in the OSCE Chairmanship, I am reminded of the words of that great Belgian and great European, Paul Henri Spaak, who said that tomorrow's reality is as important as today's, and he who never dreams will never build anything truly important. The dream of achieving a better, more secure and more democratic world must continue to be our guide and the source of our energy and determination. I am counting on the support of all of you to take a new step towards its fulfilment.

Thank you very much.