

ACTIVITY REPORT OF THE CHAIRMAN-IN-OFFICE

(1 January to 6 February 2007)

Spain takes up the OSCE Chairmanship

MADRID. On 2 January the new OSCE Chairman-in-Office, Spanish Foreign Minister Miguel Angel Moratinos, sent a New Year letter to the OSCE's 56 participating States. He pledged to focus on consolidating and deepening democratic principles and values during Spain's chairmanship of the world's largest regional security organization. Spain took over the 12-month OSCE Chairmanship from Belgium on 1 January, with Minister Moratinos succeeding Belgian Foreign Minister Karel De Gucht as Chairman-in-Office.

OSCE Chairman meets UN Special Envoy for Kosovo, says Organization keen to stay

MADRID. The OSCE Chairman-in-Office, Spanish Foreign Minister Miguel Angel Moratinos, met on 9 January 2007 the United Nations Special Envoy for Kosovo, Martti Ahtisaari, and told him the Organization intended to remain active in Kosovo after its final status is approved. The two discussed the present and future of Kosovo based on the view that the stability of the region is an essential factor to maintain security in the Balkans and Europe.

OSCE Chairman calls on Russia and Belarus to settle energy dispute quickly

MADRID. On 9 January 2007 the OSCE Chairman-in-Office, Miguel Angel Moratinos, expressed concern about the lack of agreement between the Russian Federation and Belarus on the conditions for the supply and transit of oil and made a call on authorities of both countries, to settle energy dispute quickly

OSCE Chairman-in-Office Miguel Angel Moratinos speaks at the Permanent Council

VIENNA, At his opening speech at Permanent Council, on 11 January 2007, the Chairman-in-Office, Spanish Foreign Affairs Miguel Angel Moratinos, set out priorities for his Chairmanship. The fight against terrorism, protecting the environment, encouraging participation in pluralistic societies and strengthening the OSCE's role as a forum for dialogue and co-operation are among the Organization's priorities for 2007.

The Chairman-in-Office also announced that he would be assisted in his role by Josep Borrell, who is to be appointed Special Envoy of Chairman-in-Office.

Chairman-in-Office meets heads of OSCE missions and Directors of the Organization's institutions and other bodies

VIENNA. The Chairman-in-Office, Miguel Angel Moratinos met on 11 January all heads of missions, as well as the Directors of OSCE institutions and other bodies. The Chairman-in-Office focused on regional issues and more intensely on field presence's work in the OSCE region. He stated that "our organization is still very much involved in the process of strengthening regional stability". The officials shared their views with the Chairman-in-Office on the priorities for the year 2007.

OSCE Chairman meets NGOs, says promoting diversity crucial

VIENNA, On 11 January 2007 the OSCE Chairman-in-Office, Spanish Foreign Minister Miguel Angel Moratinos, told non-governmental organizations that promoting diversity and participation in pluralistic societies will be a priority of his chairmanship.

He also announced an OSCE conference devoted to fighting discrimination against Muslims to be held in the Spanish city of Cordoba later this year.

OSCE Chairman welcomes Albanian election deal, praises President's role

MADRID. The OSCE Chairman-in-Office, Minister Miguel Angel Moratinos, welcomed on 13 January 2007 the agreement of the political parties in Albania on a compromise that opens the way for local government elections to be held within the recognized legal deadline.

The Chairman-in-Office noted he had sent a personal envoy, the Director General for Europe and North America, Ambassador Jose Pons, to assist in the search for a compromise after a request for assistance from the political parties in Albania.

Ministerial Troika agrees OSCE should play strong role in Kosovo in future

BRUSSELS. On 22 January 2007 the OSCE Ministerial Troika met in Brussels and agreed the Organization remained committed to maintaining a mission in Kosovo after a future status agreement.

The OSCE Chairman-in-Office, Spanish Foreign Minister Miguel Angel Moratinos, said the OSCE has played a vital part in Kosovo over the years and built up a great deal of experience.

The Troika agreed that the sides in the so-called frozen conflicts - protracted conflicts in countries that were part of the former Soviet Union - should be urged to resume constructive negotiations without delay and build on progress where it has been made.

The OSCE Chairman-in-Office, Minister Moratinos, urged the Presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan to redouble their efforts this year. He noted that the two countries' foreign ministers were scheduled to meet in Moscow on Tuesday 23rd January.

OSCE and EU agree to co-operate closely on Central Asia

BRUSSELS. On 23 January 2007 the OSCE Ministerial Troika and the EU Troika pledged to co-operate closely on Central Asia, a priority area for both organizations.

The OSCE Chairman-in-Office, Spanish Foreign Minister Miguel Angel Moratinos highlighted that OSCE participating States have long agreed stability in Central Asia is important for security throughout the OSCE region. He warmly welcomed the EU's renewed focus and engagement in Central Asia

The OSCE briefed the EU on Spain's priorities for its Chairmanship, including a strong focus on preventing and combating terrorism, on environmental security - particularly water management and land degradation - and on tackling all forms of intolerance.

Mediators and Observers in the Transdniestrian conflict meet in Madrid

MADRID. On 25 January 2007, at the initiative of the OSCE CiO, the Spanish Minister of Foreign Affairs and Co-operation, the Mediators and Observers responsible for co-operating in the settlement of the Transdniestrian conflict in Moldova met in Madrid.

The current state of affairs in the negotiation process on the Transdniestrian settlement, its evolution and future prospects were examined in the framework of these consultations.

OSCE Chairman voices concern over violence in zone of Georgian-Ossetian conflict

MADRID. The OSCE Chairman-in-Office, Spanish Foreign Minister Miguel Angel Moratinos, expressed his concern on 29 January 2007 over a series of violent incidents which took place in the zone of the Georgian-Ossetian conflict.

The OSCE Chairman-in Office, Minister Moratinos, said it is essential to resume as soon as possible meaningful political dialogue between all parties to the conflict to look for effective ways of reducing tension.

The Chairman-in-Office urged all sides to exercise maximum restraint and refrain from any actions or statements which would inflame the situation further.

OSCE Chairman says OSCE is ready to help Turkmenistan advance democratic reforms after election

MADRID. On 12 February the OSCE Chairman-in-Office, Spanish Foreign Minister Miguel Angel Moratinos, expressed his hopes that the dialogue between the Organization and Turkmenistan will intensify after Sunday's Presidential election, including on elections and other related areas of democracy and the rule of law.

The OSCE Chairman stressed the importance of the support the OSCE and its Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights can provide in future electoral processes and invited the Turkmen authorities to make use as soon as possible of the expertise of the organization in the advancement of democratization.

He added that the OSCE expects that, following the election, Turkmenistan will engage in a process of political reform and democratization and stands ready to support it. The Minister concluded that such process will contribute to strengthening the stability in the region.

Chairman-in-Office meets OSCE Head of Mission in Belarus

The OSCE Chairman-in-Office, Spanish Foreign Minister Miguel Angel Moratinos, met on 13 February the Head of Mission in Belarus, Ambassador Peterson, and went over the main activities of the OSCE Mission in Minsk.

The OSCE Chairman-in Office, Minister Moratinos, analysed, together with the Head of Mission, the projects which have been put forward and those which are still pending.

The OSCE Chairman also referred to the basic role that OSCE missions perform in the field.

OSCE Chairman welcomes agreement to curb North Korean nuclear ambitions and urges strong follow up

MADRID. The OSCE Chairman, Spanish Foreign Minister Miguel Angel Moratinos, welcomed on 13 February the agreement by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to start taking steps toward nuclear disarmament and urged the country to adhere to the deal reached at the six-party talks in Beijing.

The OSCE Chairman-in Office, Minister Moratinos said this is a welcome step in the right direction and a testament to the desire of all sides to reach an agreement that will enhance security in Northeast Asia and beyond.

The OSCE had condemned October's nuclear weapon test by North Korea as a provocative act that threatened regional and global security, urging North Korea to return to the six-party talks.

OSCE Chairman says work of Minorities Commissioner crucial for stability in OSCE countries

MADRID. The OSCE Chairman-in-Office, Spanish Foreign Minister Miguel Angel Moratinos, welcomed on 14 February the work of the OSCE High Commissioner for National Minorities, Rolf Ekeus, which he described as crucial for stability across the 56-country OSCE region.

The High Commissioner briefed Minister Moratinos about the work carried out by his office.

The Chairman-in-Office particularly welcomed the work carried out by the High Commissioner focusing on the situation of minorities in OSCE participating States. He also stressed the prime role of the High Commissioner as a conflict prevention tool of the OSCE.