

Statement by the delegation of Israel

Mediterranean Partnership Troika meeting

Vice prime minister and minister for strategic affairs

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On the occasion of the OSCE summit Astana 1-2/12/2010

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

Thank you very much for convening this meeting of the Mediterranean partners with the troika in spite of the very intensive and busy schedule that all member countries, and especially you, as the chairpersons of the organization are subject to during this summit.

This meeting proves, once more, the importance everybody sees in the ties between our partnership and the work of the OSCE.

May I start by congratulating the government of Kazakhstan for organizing this summit and for a very successful chairmanship of the OSCE during the past year. This chairmanship has demonstrated the Kazakh capacities combined with the growing importance of the OSCE in the region – from Vancouver to Vladivostok and its increased influence in other regions such as ours.

I would also like to congratulate Lithuania for its outgoing chairmanship of the Mediterranean partnership and wish you all the best towards their chairmanship of the OSCE in 2011 and also welcome Ireland as the next chairman of our group ensuring Israel's full cooperation and support for a successful chairmanship.

The past year has seen many new developments in the OSCE, all aiming at a better future of the organization, its work, its institutions and partnerships.

Last year, few projects were proposed to and by the partners, such as the project on environmental issues in our region following the Valencia conference of 2007. This conference was the basis for a possible cooperation between the OSCE member states and the Mediterranean partners on issues that are of great importance to our region. As this project might be facing some structural and financial difficulties, we should all join forces in order to overcome them.

The second project deals with inviting interns from partner countries to the different units of the organization for a period of 4 months. We have no doubt that this program can increase

the understanding of the importance of the OSCE and its work, in our region, which is the reason why Israel has decided to contribute financially to this project.

At our annual meeting in Malta, we have discussed the important links between the security of Europe and that of our region. The conference was useful and we would like to thank the Maltese government for organizing and hosting this important meeting.

We only regret that the partnership has not succeeded to convene the conference in one of its own countries, as is the case with the Asian partners.

We would like to recommend the organization and the chairperson in office to consider establishing a rotation among the partners of hosting the conference, so all partners will know in advance where the meetings are going to take place and can adequately and effectively take part in them.

As the main issue of the summit is the future of European security, we would like to express our appreciation for the seriousness in which you see the link between OSCE region security and the security of the Mediterranean region. You can further count on Israel's full cooperation and collaboration in dealing with these matters.

This summit commemorates two important dates in the history of the OSCE. 65 years since the end of the 2nd world war, and 35 years since the signing of the Helsinki final act, the core and basic document of the work of the OSCE.

The end of the World War 2 marks for us as Jews, also the end of the most horrible chapter of our annals. The Holocaust, the genocide of 6 million Jews, was one of the darkest periods in human history, but it also helped the international community to better understand the need for an independent Jewish state in the ancient homeland of the Jewish people. Holocaust memorial education and the teaching of the importance of tolerance and indiscrimination has been a priority of the state of Israel ever since its foundation. We have cooperated with like minded countries around the world that understand the importance of the fight against any kind of intolerance, racism and anti-Semitism. In this field we would like to mention the great work being done by ODHIR, the organ of the OSCE that promotes tolerance and human and religious dialogue in the OSCE region and the tireless efforts of the personal representatives of the chairperson in office.

This year is the 10th anniversary of the ITF – the International Taskforce for Holocaust memorial education. As Israel is chairing the task force this year, we were proud to sign a cooperation agreement with ODHIR for further joint work on this very important subject.

This summit also commemorates 35 years to the signing of the Helsinki final act. Already in that document the link between the OSCE and the Mediterranean region was defined in all three dimensions, and I quote:

To promote the development of good-neighborly relations with the non-participating Mediterranean States in conformity with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, on which their relations are based, and with the United Nations Declaration on Principles of International Law concerning Friendly Relations and Cooperation among states and accordingly, in this context, to conduct their relations with the non-participating Mediterranean States in the spirit of the principles set forth in the Declaration on Principles Guiding Relations between Participating States:

to seek, by further improving their relations with the non-participating Mediterranean States, to increase mutual confidence, so as to promote security and stability in the Mediterranean area as a whole'.

End of quote.

Israel has been an active and a supportive partner of the OSCE ever since the establishment of the partnership, as we believe in the capabilities and benefits of this partnership and in its potential. We also believe that this partnership still has to grow and get stronger, but any considerations regarding its expansion must be well thought of, thoroughly discussed and agreed by all.

Thank you