

**Statement by H.E. Mr. Māris Riekstiņš,  
Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Latvia  
at the OSCE Ministerial Council  
Athens, 1 – 2 December, 2009**

Mr. Chairman,  
Dear Colleagues,

Let me first express our high appreciation to the Greek Chairmanship having led us with inspiration and determination over the past, highly challenging year and to thank our Greek hosts for the excellent organization and hospitality at this Ministerial meeting.

I fully support the statement given by the Foreign Minister of Sweden, on behalf of the European Union.

As the most comprehensive and inclusive forum for dialogue, the **OSCE has provided an irreplaceable venue** for promotion of understanding, overcoming differences, reducing concerns and promoting cooperation. Strengthening of our security requires efforts in all dimensions - political-military, economic and environmental, as well as the human dimension.

The OSCE has always been in the frontline of generating new ideas and long-term perspectives. Latvia **commends the Greek Chairmanship** for its initiative to launch the **Corfu Process**, a wide-ranging and open dialogue on European security, a process aimed at working together towards the convergence of different strategic perceptions, and to restore confidence and trust. We are encouraged by the positive spirit of the informal exploratory dialogue, which was initiated this fall on the key issues of security in the OSCE area. We should continue this dialogue.

In my view, the **key aspects** to be underlined are the following:

*First.* Our dialogue in Corfu and later in Vienna has shown deep divergences in **perceptions** about the factors determining our security. This situation should not be treated lightly. The differing views are strongly held, and determine policies and actions of participating states. Further **strategic political dialogue** seems indispensable, if we have a genuine will to bridge the existing gaps in mutual understanding.

*Second.* For the OSCE to be credible in its search for improved security, we must be able to make progress in places, where the need for security is

the most urgent and most desperate. **Unresolved conflicts** rightfully have come to the forefront of our debate as they pose a serious threat to the stability of the entire OSCE region. Conflict in Georgia last year and process of settlement thereof is a painful demonstration of how basic OSCE principles, not least those of territorial integrity and state sovereignty, can be disregarded. Resolving the protracted conflicts through coordinated action, with a cross-dimensional approach and on the basis of effective multilateralism, is of paramount importance for **restoring confidence and trust** among the participating States.

Clearly, political will is needed by the parties directly involved, as well as by influential key stakeholders. Latvia calls upon all participating States to address with strong determination the unresolved conflicts in the OSCE area as a matter of priority, on the basis of peaceful negotiated settlements in accordance with the principles enshrined in the Helsinki Final Act.

*Third.* Improvement in **implementation of all of our commitments** is the key aspect that needs to be addressed. Selective or partial implementation of our commitments in all three dimensions often leads to erosion and weakening of our security. We underline the need for our clear message – **reconfirming the validity of all OSCE principles, norms and commitments** and undertaking the work towards their full implementation, in good faith.

Mr. Chairman,

The OSCE is a uniquely comprehensive and encompassing platform for addressing European security, it has undiminished potential to contribute to improvement of our shared security and rising our ability to meet the present and future challenges of European security.

In closing, Mr. Chairman, I would like to wish success to the incoming Kazakh Chairmanship!

Thank you.