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STATEMENT
TO THE MINISTERIAL COUNCIL OF THE OSCE
by the Undersecretary of State
to the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Sen. Roberto Antonione

Mr. Chairman, Mr. Secretary General, Excellencies, Colleagues,

Italy recognises itself fully in the Statement delivered by the Danish Presidency of the European Union. On a national basis, I wish to express a few additional considerations.

We are grateful to Minister Martins da Cruz for the commitment and the effectiveness with which he has chaired our Organisation during quite a challenging year.

The fight against terrorism remains among the utmost priorities of the international community and of our own organisation, as demonstrated by the important document we are about to approve. The Italian government is fully aware of it and committed alongside the countries that comprise the broad alliance created in the wake of September 11. We are persuaded that our organisation can play a crucial role in such a combat. Terrorism is a phenomenon that stems from many factors and the activity of the OSCE, as an organisation that operates in the three dimensions of security, namely the human, the politico-military and the economic environmental ones, has a special comparative advantage in the common effort undertaken to remove the very causes and not only the symptoms of such a scourge. Furthermore, OSCE benefits from the participation of all the states of the Euro-

Atlantic and Euro-Asian space, and its web of field presences allows it to operate in a more capillary manner, stimulating the essential factor that civil societies constitute. OSCE's crucial tasks derive from it, both for purposes of consensus-building and pan-European solidarity, as well as an instrument operating on the innermost causes of instability.

The year about to end has witnessed the conclusion of important developments on the road to Euro-Atlantic integration, bringing with them the need to rethink the overall role of our organisation, particularly with respect to the new risks to security. That will be an issue on which we will deal in the months to come, convinced as we are that we will find strategies adequate to render the action of OSCE even more effective.

The European security architecture is evolving toward a more comprehensive maturity. To the benefit of continental stability as well as of the well-being of our people. Given the inclusiveness of its membership, OSCE is an integral part of such a security framework and undertakes tasks that cannot be delegated to others. The Platform on co-operative security approved at Istanbul remains our reference, in order to promote the appropriate synergies with the other International Organisations.

Many expectations are thrust upon our organisation which stimulate us to multiply our efforts in specific directions. I have in mind in particular the role of OSCE in conflict resolution, where much still remains to be done. We must operate more effectively not only to avoid that the so-called "frozen conflicts" become also "forgotten", but in order to solve them as soon as possible, demonstrating thereby that our organisation is indeed able to perform the role that was attributed to it.

Next year we will also have to complete the task that we have undertaken, and set off to a good start, in order to translate in practical terms a concept of security based on three dimensions: our decision to hold an Annual Security Review Conference, and the reinforcement of our economic and environmental dimension will allow OSCE to operate in a more balanced and therefore more effective manner. Such an approach should also enable OSCE to enhance its role to the benefit of countries that need to speed up the internal processes they have undertaken for institutional and

democratic reconstruction, which will in turn promote the achievement of their ever greater integration into the OSCE space.

Finally, I would like to draw your attention to a dossier that is most dear to my country. A country that is geographically and historically more sensitive than others to security issues arising in the Mediterranean region. Dialogue with our Mediterranean partners has become more intense in these last years, but we are convinced that much remains to be done in terms of co-operative security, to achieve concrete operational results. To this end, we should work on a format and an agenda for our dialogue that is closer to the interests of our partners, which would encourage them to contribute more actively to it. We are persuaded that European security itself would benefit from such an investment in the future of the Southern Mediterranean.

Lastly, M. Chairman, I wish to assure you that, also in the perspective of its Presidency of the European Union in the second semester of the coming year, Italy will make every effort to support our organisation under the Chairmanship of the Netherlands - to which our warmest wishes are addressed - with the same commitment with which we have supported the Portuguese Chair.

Thank you, Mr.Chairman