

29 Sep 2006 -13:04

## OSCE Chairman calls on leaders to help solve tense "frozen conflicts"

OSCE Chairman calls on leaders to help solve tense "frozen conflicts"

OSCE Chairman calls on leaders to help solve tense "frozen conflicts"

OSCE Chairman calls on leaders to help solve tense "frozen conflicts"VIENNA, 28 September 2006 - The OSCE Chairman-in-Office, Belgian Foreign Minister Karel De Gucht, called today for political leaders to show vision and take responsibility to help solve "frozen conflicts" that threaten to erupt anew at any time. The Minister also told a session of the OSCE Permanent Council attended by the King of the Belgians, Albert II, that the Organization needed to restore confidence in the 56-nation body as an effective instrument for peace and stability throughout Europe. "The 'frozen conflicts' remind us that peace is never permanent; it is something to which attention must be paid each and every day," said the Chairman-in-Office. He said Belgium - which chairs the OSCE this year - had tried to help solve the unresolved conflicts on OSCE territory. "It must be admitted, unfortunately, that it has done so without much in the way of results - at least so far," Minister De Gucht said. "In some respects, the hopes of seeing decisive progress in Nagorno-Karabakh have been dashed. Tension in the South Caucasus remains high - worryingly so. Negotiations on the Transdniestria issue have stalled." The Chairman-in-Office said the outlines for solving the conflicts were well known and elements for settling them were already on the table. The key was political will. "I thus call on the political leadership of the countries concerned, in whatever way they are involved and on the basis of their own capacities, to demonstrate vision and take on their responsibilities," he said. The Chairman-in-Office said last year's Ministerial Council in Ljubljana had helped clear the atmosphere after years of doubt about the OSCE's viability but the underlying fundamentals threatening to create new rift lines in Europe remained. "They should be addressed," said Minister De Gucht. "This is why our main task is to restore confidence in the OSCE as an effective instrument for peace and stability in the whole of Europe; through co-operation, preventive diplomacy, economic development, respect for human rights and the promotion of democratic institutions." Heads of delegations to the OSCE and senior figures from OSCE field presences and institutions attended the Permanent Council, which is the OSCE's main regular decision-making body. King Albert also took part in a working meeting, attended a reception and at a lunch delivered a brief speech in which he particularly praised the OSCE's work on fighting trafficking in human beings. "This is a policy area where a continent-wide approach based on fundamental values and rights is absolutely essential," the King said.

FPS Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and Development  
Cooperation - Press service (P&C/P)  
Rue des Petits Carmes 15  
1000 Brussels  
Belgium  
+32 2 501 81 11  
<http://diplomatie.belgium.be>

Karl Lagatie  
Spokesperson  
+32 477 40 32 12  
[Karl.Lagatie@diplobel.fed.be](mailto:Karl.Lagatie@diplobel.fed.be)

Arnaud Gaspart  
Deputy spokesperson  
+32 2 501 87 66  
[Arnaud.Gaspart@diplobel.fed.be](mailto:Arnaud.Gaspart@diplobel.fed.be)