



Statement by  
the Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Spain,  
H.E. Mr. Idefonso Castro López,  
2017 OSCE Mediterranean Conference  
24 October 2017, Palermo, Italy

Mr. Chairman,

Thank you one again for your warm welcome to Palermo.

Dear colleagues,

Italy and Spain are linked by history and affection and also by natural affinity in international relations and by our commitment to multilateralism.

In the framework of the OSCE, both countries are convinced of the importance of paying more attention to the cooperation with our Mediterranean Partners.

A decade ago, Spain had to cope with a migration crisis when more than 45.000 irregular immigrants arrived to our coasts. We promoted then an integral policy which was at the origin of the Rabat process and we did it alone. Now in Europe we carry out a team-work.

Today, Spain is the second contributor to Operation Sophia, which has also an important role in saving lives and fighting human trafficking in the Mediterranean.

We support the complementary role of the OSCE in the areas where it has added value, such as fight against human trafficking, border management or human rights. It is time to implement the Decision on Migration that we adopted in Hamburg.

Our intervention later on in this Conference will be mainly focused on two aspects: in Session 1 we will present the joint Spanish-Moroccan Operation Odyssey against trafficking in human beings. In Session 3 we intend to share our experience on integration policies, having received 5 million immigrants in only 10 years.

Let me also refer to Youth. Young people represent the vast majority of migrants and refugees. Young people are our present and specially our future.

The OSCE Conference on Youth and Security that Spain organized last May in Malaga, agreed in a Decalogue of Recommendations which stress the importance of taking into account young people's realities and voices.

Spain is willing to continue leading the Youth and Security agenda in the OSCE.

Mr. Chairman,

The cornerstone of rule of law in Spain is our 1978 Constitution. Spain is a well-established democratic State under the rule of law. The accredited trajectory of our democracy places us among the countries that enjoy the highest degree of protection of fundamental rights. Like in any other country, our Constitution of 1978 is the cornerstone of our system.

Spain is now facing a serious crisis that will be solved according to our Constitution and legal system's toolbox. What is at stake is the rule of law. Constitution and the Catalan Statute of Autonomy have been breached by the regional government of Catalonia. Court rulings have not been respected.

The Spanish Government, with the support of the main political parties, which will guarantee a broad support to any decision, has initiated the adoption of the measures foreseen in our Constitution to restore the rule of law. The Senate will discuss and decide about the measures requested by the Government that are proportioned and temporary.

Since the very beginning of this crisis we have been in regular contact with OSCE institutions and have shared information with all participating States. I wish to take this opportunity to thank for the statements defending democracy and the rule of law in Spain, because it is the rule of law that is at stake.

Last week Spain was elected member of the Human Rights Council, for the term 2018-2020. This election is the recognition by the international community of our country's commitment with the promotion of fundamental freedoms. It is also an appreciation of Spain's commitment with democracy and the rule of law.

Finally, we commend the Italian Chairmanship for its leadership of the Mediterranean Contact Group. We will continue our cooperation with the future Slovak Chairmanship. I am glad to confirm that we are ready to host, if so decided, the OSCE Mediterranean Conference 2018 in Spain.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.