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OSCE Mediterranean Contact Group

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Spain

Speaking Points

I would like to commend the Slovak Chairmanship for organizing this meeting. I thank today's interesting presentations of the Note Speakers, that confirmed once more, the importance of water management in the OSCE.

I fully share the comments made on our behalf by the European Union. Allow me to add some comments in my national capacity.

Spain, as many Mediterranean countries, knows by experience the importance of good water governance. We have a broad experience in water management and cooperation with our neighboring countries.

We are also convinced of the importance of OSCE's activities in this field.

Spain was at the origin of the so-called process of Valencia in 2007 and that was recall today by the coordinator of economic and environmental activities. My country has also actively contributed to the different OSCE events on water management since then, such as the 2016 Economic and Environmental Dimension Implementation Meeting, including the participation of national experts.

Mr. Chairman

There are three main areas in which I consider that Spain's experience can be shared with OSCE's participating States and Partners for Cooperation:

1. The holistic and participative approach to water management is assured in Spain through the 9 Water Confederations; they address the following fundamental aspects:

- Water use for irrigation and human consumption
- Water infrastructure, such as dams
- Water quality and environmental management

Although the Confederations are ultimately accountable to the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Environment, their functions rest on a participation basis, which includes regional administrations and civil society organizations, which have a big say in how the river basin is management.

2. Transboundary water cooperation: some of the main rivers in Spain are common with our neighboring country, Portugal. Spain and Portugal have a well-established co-operation through a Convention on sustainable water management known as the Convention of Albufeira, signed in 1998. It applies to all shared river basins, which represent 41% of the surface of Spain and 62% of that of Portugal.

3. Let me also underline that Spain is fully engaged in the promotion of access to water and sanitation as a basic human right and that, to that end, Spain participates actively in various initiatives alongside with other States represented around this table. Spain is also active in the fight against extreme phenomena, such as drought and flooding, and cooperation on water related issues and policies

Mr. Chairman, Spain is willing to share the aforementioned experiences, as well as to learn from the experiences of other participating States, Partners for Cooperation and different stakeholders in the water management sector.

I would like to conclude by recalling the potential of the cooperation with the Union for the Mediterranean as it was highlighted, in today's presentation.

Thank you very much.