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The intervention of the Holy See in the OSCE ministerial council

Vatican City, Tuesday 15 December 2009 (ZENIT.org).-Today it is increasingly urgent “a common conversion to peace, a peace founded on solid pillars of love, justice, truth, and freedom”. It was said by Archbishop Dominique Mamberti, Secretary for Relations with the States of the Holy See, speaking at the 17 Ministerial Council of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), in Athens.

The OSCE, which is headquartered in Vienna, Austria, was founded in 1975 in Helsinki as a Conference for Security and Cooperation in Europe. It is currently the largest regional security organization in the world with 56 states members from Europe, Central Asia, and North America, while many countries are their counterparts for cooperation.

Taking the floor at the meeting, on 1 December, the prelate as reported by the Vatican newspaper L’Osservatore Romano-praised the “Corfu Process”, launched last June at the end of an informal meeting at the ministerial level of the OSCE to establish a new dialogue on the future of European security.

Monsignor Mamberti expressed the appreciation of the Holy See for the initiatives undertaken by the Greek presidency to reinforce the functioning of the instruments and mechanisms available for the prevention of conflicts and post-conflict rehabilitation.

However, he pointed out, the important steps forward in the control of armaments cannot overshadow the “forgotten wars” and the “prolonged hostilities” that continue to cause death and damage, “often in the silence and indifference of considerable sectors of public opinion”.

“Prolonged or frozen conflict pointed out-they lead only to the prolongation of the suffering of civilians, especially when the conflict is lengthened by economic sanctions or when the military objectives have been exhausted or inaccessible to the air force”.

“In short, limited instruments, implemented over a long period, will often have disastrous consequences and, at the same time, produce scarce results and promise a conflict without a foreseeable end”.

Therefore, he stressed, “the future action of the OSCE should necessarily imply a serious effort to resolve prolonged conflicts over time”.

Moreover, he added, “there will be no peace on earth if the oppression of the peoples, the injustices, and the economic imbalances that still exist persist”.

On the OSCE agenda for the next few years, archbishop Mamberti underlined the centrality of the relationship between migration policies and security.

Today, he observed, there are more than two hundred million people in the world who live and work in countries other than the one in which they were born and of which they were citizens.

The situation, he said, reflects policies aimed “at responding to emotional and burning demands for control and integration by public opinion”.

“However, he added--, the concrete advantages accepted through the acceptance of immigrants are often obscured by an ambivalent attitude in the social media and public opinion, which allow negative generalizations that create stereotypes of the new arrivals”.

This leads to the “need to pay greater attention to migrants themselves and not only to their economic role as a workforce and permanent settlers” and to reinforce “the entire system of guardianship and human rights which cannot be relegated to a secondary supporting role.

In this field, archbishop Mamberti described as “primary” importance the family reunification and also the education of migrants so that they can be more aware of their rights.

The Vatican representative referred to the numerous acts of intolerance and violations of religious freedom that “continue to be perpetrated under numerous forms”.

Sadly, he noted, “with the rise of religious intolerance in the world, it is well documented that Christians are the most discriminated religious group, given that over two hundred million of them, from different confessions, could be found in location of difficulty because of legal and cultural structures that lead them to be discriminated against”.

In the light of all this, he invited to consider religious communities not as “sources of social or cultural conflict, but as an important factor in the promotion of peace,

mutual understanding, and common human values”.