



Check against delivery

ADDRESS

**by the OSCE Chairman-in-Office Dr. Dimitrij Rupel,
at the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly 14th Annual Session,
Washington, 1 July 2005**

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is good to be back among you and to be in Washington for a major OSCE meeting. My compliments to our hosts, and to you all for your active interest and involvement in the work of the OSCE.

This is a dynamic period of change for the OSCE, and I am glad that we have chosen Mr. Marc Perrin de Brichambaut to help steward this process as OSCE Secretary General.

Significant reforms are being proposed, including a strengthened role for the Secretary General. I believe that we have a very capable person to help bring the OSCE into a new era.

Much of the heavy lifting in terms of management reform has already been done by Mr. Jan Kubis. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Mr. Kubis for his long and distinguished service to the OSCE. He has been a great Chief Administrative Officer during a time of significant growth for this Organization, a wise counselor to the Chair, and a shrewd crisis manager, when circumstances demanded this. He will be missed, and I wish him the best of luck in his future activities.

Common Purpose in Changing Times

Earlier this week I received the report of the Panel of Eminent Persons. It is entitled "Common Purpose: Towards a More Effective OSCE". There is considerable food for thought in their recommendations, and I believe that we now have the raw materials to hold productive high-level consultations in September and in a follow-up on the way to Ljubljana Ministerial Council and beyond. I urge participating States to study the recommendations about the new legal

personality about a charter, about the transformation of the blocking veto and the committees for the three dimensions. I urge you to come well prepared for the autumn meetings in order to usher in a process of identifying the ways to refresh the political discussions in the OSCE.

The Parliamentary Assembly can play a key role in this process. I have read the report of the Colloquium on the Future of the OSCE and I appreciate its bold ideas. Your input can stimulate participating States to think “outside the box” and to raise issues that consensus-based bodies may shy away from.

I encourage you to continue this process and to feed your ideas into the high-level consultations in September.

The challenge in the coming months will be to develop a new strategic perspective for the OSCE’s future, and to see the ways to reform the Organization, its structures and its functioning accordingly. This should be a holistic and politically oriented approach.

One sad note in this reform discussion. Last week we were all shocked over the news about the death of Ambassador Nikolay Afanasievsky, a Russian member of the OSCE Panel of Eminent Persons. Allow me to take this opportunity to express my sincere condolences to the Russian government and the Ambassador’s family. His vast expertise and wisdom about the Organization were invaluable to all the participating States.

Demonstrating Relevance in Crisis Management

The debate on reform, while being discussed for many years, was kick-started last year by a number of CIS States which questioned the relevance of the OSCE, outlined their views on its deficiencies and their ideas on possible improvements.

First and foremost, the political events in some countries in the last year have underlined the OSCE’s inclusive character.

Secondly, the OSCE has demonstrated its usefulness as a rapid-reaction crisis manager and proved itself as being a flexible organization. We have operations on the ground with good

relations with the host country, an awareness of the local situations, contacts to civil society, and links to other actors in the international community.

Thirdly, the OSCE has demonstrated the merits of its cross-dimensional approach to security which is both co-operative and comprehensive. We work with the parties involved as their peers to assist them during difficult times. We make use of our common instruments to promote dialogue, security and human rights.

Many situations in the OSCE area require a comprehensive response.

My first visit as Chairman in Office was in Ukraine, following on from the momentous events over last Christmas and New Year. The OSCE role was crucial in restoring the faith of the people of Ukraine in the integrity of their democratic system. The OSCE has immediately established a good relationship with one of the important OSCE's participating States, because a democratic, united and stable Ukraine is vital for regional security and co-operation.

Take also the case of Kyrgyzstan. There the OSCE was immediately on the spot to help reduce tensions. Since then we have developed a Workplan for Kyrgyzstan together with the interim authorities. It is like a microcosm of the OSCE's practical advantages: working to re-establish law and order, particularly through police assistance; facilitating political dialogue; providing elections assistance; encouraging economic reform; promoting inter-ethnic integration; and supporting the development of free media.

ODIHR, with support from the Parliamentary Assembly, will monitor the Presidential elections on 10 July. I hope that Kyrgyzstan will live up to its commitments to hold free and fair elections. It is important to restore the confidence of the electorate in a legitimately elected and representative government.

I believe that we should be ambitious and follow up our considerable engagement in Kyrgyzstan with a more comprehensive strategy for assisting all the States of Central Asia on their path to full democracy. The OSCE – also bearing in mind its partnerships with Afghanistan and Mongolia – is well-placed to do lead this, and could strengthen its added value in the region, including through promoting regional economic co-operation. OSCE Institutions and units of the

Secretariat, together with Field Operations on the spot all have a role to play, and this should be co-ordinated in a more holistic way.

Recent developments in Uzbekistan do not look too good. We do not know exactly what happened in Andijan on Friday the 13th of May this year. For example there are significant discrepancies between casualty figures reported by government sources and those reported by the media and human rights groups. We will not know the truth until there is an independent international inquiry. I urge the government of Uzbekistan to co-operate with the international community to undertake an independent investigation into the events of that bloody day. Failure to do so would suggest that the authorities have something to hide.

We are all committed to the fight against terrorism, but we are also committed to protecting human rights. Using excessive and indiscriminate force against civilians can not be excused.

More generally, I urge the Uzbek authorities to remain open to international co-operation and to live up to their international commitments. Security in Central Asia – particularly the Fergana Valley region – is of concern to the whole OSCE community and requires co-operative solutions.

I am also concerned about the fate of Uzbek refugees in Kyrgyzstan. Two weeks ago, four Uzbek asylum seekers were deported from Kyrgyzstan under unexplained circumstances. I urge Kyrgyzstan to respect international commitments and its own standards and responsibilities towards those seeking shelter within its borders.

I am encouraged, however, on the news from the Caucasus. As you know, on 30 May the foreign ministers of Georgia and the Russian Federation signed a joint declaration on closing Russian bases at Batumi and Akhalkalaki and other military facilities in Georgia by 2008, as foreseen in the Joint Statement of the two countries made during the OSCE Summit in Istanbul in 1999. I hope that Georgia and the Russian Federation will soon sign an agreement on the withdrawal operation. This will be an important step towards enhancing good-neighborly relations.

Unfortunately, the situation in South Ossetia is less bright as kidnappings and shooting incidents are causing serious concern. Furthermore the process of de-militarizing the zone of conflict is not proceeding at a sufficient pace.

Nevertheless, the sides have responded positively to the OSCE proposal for a needs assessment with a view to further promote economic reconstruction as well as initiatives for joint policing. The OSCE maintains its monitoring role and actively participates in Joint Control Commission meetings. To further assist the parties in the peace process my Personal Representative will soon travel to Georgia.

In relation to the Nagorno Karabakh conflict we see reasons for optimism. I am hopeful that high-level meetings that have been taking place will bear fruit, and that the positive spirit that I have witnessed will be translated into steps that can lead to a peaceful resolution of this long-running conflict. I urge the sides to come to an agreement and to explain the merits of it to their people. The OSCE is, as always, ready to do its part to foster security and co-operation in this important region. I plan to travel to visit Armenia and Azerbaijan in early September in order to lend support to the settlement process.

The settlement of the Transdniestrian conflict has received new momentum with proposals from Ukraine which all sides are currently studying. I hope that negotiations including the mediators and the parties will resume in earnest at the earliest possible stage. I plan to return to Moldova in the autumn to give my personal support to this process also with a perspective in mind of a possible OSCE monitoring operation of the Ukrainian-Moldovan border.

In the past six months I have promoted the OSCE's role as a dialogue-for-peace-builder in Kosovo. Dialogue is vital. During my visits to the region I saw how ethnic Serbs and Albanians live in isolation from each other, and how there is insufficient dialogue between Pristina and Belgrade. The issue of Kosovo's future status is not going to disappear by ignoring it or hoping that it goes away. Indeed, experience shows that lack of involvement usually has the opposite effect.

The OSCE is a well-established and well-respected international partner in Kosovo and should use this advantage to the overall benefit of the province. It has an important role to play in the months ahead as the international community examines the Standards' implementation and ponders the future of Kosovo.

Reconciliation is vital in South Eastern Europe, and this can only be achieved through restorative justice. I am glad to report that the OSCE has opened a new chapter in its work in the region by

agreeing with the International Crime Tribunal for Yugoslavia to monitor transferred war crimes trials also on behalf of the ICTY in Croatia, Serbia and Montenegro and Bosnia and Herzegovina. The OSCE is also facilitating inter-state co-operation among these three countries on judicial co-operation in war crimes proceedings.

Implementing Commitments

I would like now to switch focus to broader issues, especially the need to implement OSCE commitments.

The Annual Security Review Conference, which took place 10 days ago in Vienna, again demonstrated its value to review the work done and as a generator of ideas for stocking the OSCE's arsenal of politico-military peace-building instruments.

Counter-terrorism remains our highest priority in the first basket. But there are plenty of other areas where the OSCE can be of assistance to its participants, for example in destroying weapons and ammunition and improving stockpile security. Furthermore, we should work to adapt existing OSCE principles governing non-proliferation in order to support the regional implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1540 which aims at preventing individuals and terrorist organizations from getting their hands on nuclear, chemical and biological weapons.

We are close to the consensus on a high level seminar on military doctrines, an idea that I strongly support.

I also urge participating States to complete an OSCE Border Security and Management Concept by the Ministerial Council in Ljubljana.

The recent OSCE Conference in Cordoba on Anti-Semitism and on Other Forms of Intolerance was the latest in a series of high profile events that demonstrate the commitment of OSCE States to fight intolerance and discrimination. The key is follow-up, and implementation of existing commitments. As the Cordoba Declaration says, the main responsibility rests with participating States to take action.

The Parliamentary Assembly can play a special role in raising awareness about the implementation of commitments in national parliaments. As legislators, you are uniquely placed to take your governments to task if they fail to turn fine words into concrete action.

The OSCE can become more operational in this field through the recently established Tolerance and Non-discrimination Programme within the ODIHR and through the work of the Personal Representatives on Combating Racism, Xenophobia and Discrimination as well as ODIHR's Tolerance and Non-Discrimination Programme. I believe that through an action-oriented approach the OSCE can play a useful role in combating ugly manifestations of intolerance and discrimination that pose a threat to democracy.

At the Sofia Ministerial Council we committed ourselves to further develop OSCE activities in regard to migration. Migration and integration are key themes of Slovenia's Chairmanship, and are directly related to issues like cross-border security management, and integrating diversity in multi-ethnic communities. This topic is needed to be addressed cross-dimensionally.

This year's Economic Forum provided considerable food for thought on how the OSCE can play a greater role in this area. Our intention is to prepare an Action Plan or Strategy on managing migration issues, for adoption at this year's Ministerial Council in Ljubljana in December. Other ideas include a Statement of Principles for guiding the integration of persons belonging to national minorities – an issue that I know has been raised by this Assembly – as well as a conference or workshop on this theme, paying particular attention to the CIS region. We also support the drafting of a handbook on managing migration, a more active role by the OSCE in awareness-raising regarding migration, and close co-operation with the International Organization for Migration on migrant-related projects. We should also take a closer look at demographic trends and population development over the long term, by perhaps setting up an Advisory Group to the Economic Co-ordinator and/or expanding the mandate of the existing Informal Working Group on Gender Equality and Anti-trafficking.

I draw special attention to this topic because it is relatively new area for the OSCE and one that concerns all participating States.

The Promises We Keep

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In less than a month we will mark the thirtieth anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act. As you may recall, US President Ford was roundly criticized by the American media before he left Washington for his European visit in July 1975. “Jerry, Don’t Go!” said the *Wall Street Journal*. *Time* magazine ran a cover story called “Showtime in Helsinki” presenting Gerald Ford and Leonid Brezhnev and an all-star cast in “good-bye to World War II”. Ford was criticized for selling out to the Soviets and agreeing to a new Yalta agreement.

And yet, the Helsinki Final Act put in motion a process that few could have anticipated – a process that transformed Europe from the bottom up. Brave dissidents took to heart the principles of the Final Act, particularly Principle Seven on respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. And they pressed their leaders to live up to their promises.

Let me repeat after Secretary Rice what President Ford said in his speech in Finlandia Hall in front of the biggest gathering of its kind since the Congress of Vienna: “History will judge the CSCE, not by the promises that we make, but by the promises we keep”.

I would like to pay special tribute to the US Commission for Security and Co-operation in Europe and Helsinki Federations across the OSCE area for the work that they have done over the past three decades to raise awareness and to put pressure on regimes to keep their promises.

That pressure is still necessary, as is support for the OSCE’s work across the full range of its activities. I urge you to take advantage of this anniversary year and the focus on reforming the OSCE in order to help usher this Organization into a new era. *Today we understand that democracy is the best long-term security guarantee.*

Thank you for your attention and I stand ready to take your questions.