



## **Statement**

**by the OSCE Chairman-in-Office Dr. Dimitrij Rupel  
at the Central European Initiative Summit of Heads of Government**

*Piešť'any, Slovakia, 25 November 2005*

Mr. Chairman,  
Your Excellencies,

I am honored to address this Annual Summit meeting of the Member States of the Central European Initiative (CEI) as Chairman-in-Office of the OSCE and to participate in the dialogue on the situation in the region, new developments in the process of EU integration and the construction of a stable and prosperous Europe. Allow me first to express my gratitude to the Government of Slovakia for its hospitality and excellent organization of this important event.

### ***The OSCE – the all-embracing link***

Amongst European intergovernmental bodies the OSCE is somehow unique. First of all, it is not only *European*, it is, at the same time, *North-American* and *Central Asian*. It is an Organization covering a large portion of the northern hemisphere.

As such, it is the only organization that embraces member states of all other organizations and bodies in the region by its broad membership, be it the EU, the Council of Europe, NATO, CIS or the Central European Initiative.

What is it that keeps member states of all these different actors with their specific history and mandates together in the OSCE? Obviously, it is the shared values and commitments, a common interest in a stable environment without dividing lines.

This year we mark the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act, the founding document of the CSCE and the 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the signing of the Paris Charter for a New Europe. These documents have indeed been milestones in the process to unite the continent and to create democratic societies based on the rule of law and human rights.

The provisions of the Helsinki Final Act have been a crucial reference for other international organizations. They established a comprehensive approach to security, which is today generally accepted as a modern answer to threats and challenges. In short, the OSCE is not a relic of the Cold War: it is an Organization that was ahead of its time.

Promoting security through co-operation is most effective when it occurs at all levels. As the old saying goes, we need to think globally and act locally. Global instruments like the United Nations provide universal guidance. Regional arrangements like the OSCE provide a framework for addressing trans-continental issues. And some other regional as well as sub-regional organizations facilitate regional solutions to regional issues.

The Central European Initiative is a perfect example. It was the first regional co-operation forum embracing Central, South Eastern and Eastern European countries, established with the aim to help them to come closer to European standards and to assist them in the process of their preparation for EU membership. It has been a catalyst for realizing the vision articulated in the Charter of Paris of a Europe whole and free. The enlargement of the EU in May last year is the best possible recognition of CEI's efforts. This organization will continue to play an important role as a facilitator of European unity.

### ***OSCE and CEI are natural partners***

For the OSCE, the CEI is a natural partner. The co-operation of our two organizations has been fruitful in the past, in a spirit of mutual trust and confidence. Just think of the fruitful co-operation between the CEI and the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities.

The OSCE is locally present in 11 out of 17 CEI countries, either by field missions or by its central bodies. As the countries of the Western Balkans are establishing closer ties with the EU, the OSCE, through its field presences, has been very active in providing assistance in

institution building, law enforcement, media freedom, rule of law, human rights and police training.

I would like to see this go even farther, for example in issues like migration and integration, border management, and inter-cultural dialogue.

Many of these issues are on the Agenda of the CEI, too, and decisive steps were taken in this regard at the Portorož Summit in November last year.

### *A relevant instrument for crisis settlement*

Our organization has made considerable efforts to resolve crises and conflicts in a number of CEI countries. I already mentioned the Western Balkans, and would like to stress once again that the OSCE is well prepared to provide assistance along with the EU and other key actors. We are ready to facilitate institution building and the monitoring of standards – that are so important for further development of Kosovo. Our future-oriented approach is also reflected in organizing the international conference "Dayton - Ten Years After: Conflict Resolution and Co-operation Perspectives", that will take place - under kind co-sponsorship of the CEI - from 29 November to 1 December in Sarajevo.

A year ago, the OSCE has helped to break the deadlock that Ukraine faced during the Presidential elections.

The recent resumption of negotiations on a peaceful and sustainable resolution of the status of Transdnistria within Moldova that the OSCE had been facilitating, and the invitation of the EU and US to observe the negotiation process offer some hope for a settlement to this long-standing dispute.

But we should do more together to prevent crises and to contain threats to our common security. CEI countries could benefit even more from the expertise the OSCE offers in its political-military, economic and environmental and human dimensions.

*As strong as our common purpose*

Mr. Chairman,  
Your Excellencies,

Last year some participating States of the OSCE voiced concern about a lack of ownership in our organization. An organization based on consensus and mutual confidence cannot ignore such a call. That is why the OSCE is currently examining ways to strengthen its effectiveness. On 5 and 6 December I will host the OSCE Ministerial Council meeting in Ljubljana. I hope that at that meeting we will be able to take decisions to strengthen the OSCE's capacity to prevent and resolve conflicts.

I encourage you to invest political will into enhancing the OSCE. The return on your investment will be a safer and more united Europe. This is in all of our interests.

Mr. Chairman,

Chairing the OSCE has been a considerable challenge, but I believe that Slovenia has answered the call. I would like to congratulate you for Slovakia's Chairmanship of the CEI this year. My best wishes go to Albania for its upcoming Presidency of the CEI in 2006 and to Austria for its presidency of the EU.

Our region has probably profited the most from changes in Europe in the past fifteen years. We need to build on this growth in order to expand the zone of prosperity and co-operation. The CEI and OSCE remain vital tools in this process. They deserve our continued support.

Thank you for your attention.