

ADDRESS

**by the Minister for Foreign Affairs dr. Dimitrij Rupel
at the OSCE Ministerial Meeting in Maastricht,
1 December 2003**

Mr. Chairman, Mr. Secretary General, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

May I begin by expressing our gratitude to Mr. Jaap De Hoop Schaeffer and the Netherlands Chairmanship for their excellent work in 2003 and for the hospitality we enjoy here in Maastricht.

Mr. Chairman,

Let me first refer to the draft OSCE Strategy to Address Threats to Stability and Security in the Twenty-first Century. I think it has come at the right time.

The political crises and other complications in the Western Balkans, like in Kosovo, or in the Caucasus (Georgia), some of them overcome, some of them not yet, should make us think about ourselves and our duties regarding the most sensitive OSCE issues. We have witnessed clashes and confrontations that could, perhaps, be avoided by more frequent and more energetic mediation. What was needed in many of these situations was mediating, tension-relaxing structures, more diversity-management, more pluralism in the media, more political dialogue with the help of the OSCE institutions and offices.

Maybe it would be a refreshment if a few delegations and speakers, instead of giving general statements, reported on the problems and experiences they themselves have, or have had in the past, with transition to democracy, with social crisis, with political monopolies, ethnic conflict, minorities, with illegal migration, terrorism, security, pluralism of the media, discrimination and intolerance, dialogue, independent judiciary, free civil society etc.

In this context, the Strategy is a very good document, even if it contains some abstract concepts and polished statements. But the Strategy's added value is in its operational nature.

In operational terms, the Strategy is significantly reinforced by various existing and emerging mechanisms, like the mechanism for combating trafficking with human beings, or decision concerning the OSCE Counter-Terrorism Network. Also, the Strategy is a living document, open for further adaptation, through broad and comprehensive political dialogue. This flexibility is essential for us to deal with the ever-evolving security environment.

The Strategy refers to terrorism as a cause of instability, not as a consequence of some previous social ill. The important sentence here is: "There is no justification for terrorism whatsoever".

The Strategy rightly underlines the importance of outreach, since most of the new security challenges are of trans-national nature. Building up on our partnership with Mediterranean and Asian Partners for Co-operation will help us in attaining our goals. Strengthening security and cooperation with them is therefore essential for the stability of the whole OSCE area. Transmission of OSCE's experience in specific realms at the request of Partner states from adjacent regions is a potential that should be explored.

As the incoming Chair of the Contact Group with the Mediterranean Partners Slovenia welcomes the proposals and recommendations of the recent Mediterranean Seminar in Aqaba. They represent a very useful input for formulating the platform for our work in the coming months. It is natural to be ambitious in promoting the OSCE's Mediterranean partnership where many historical, cultural, economic and political ties already exist.

In this context allow me also to shortly mention the work of the Adriatic Ionian Initiative, which Slovenia currently chairs. Its working tables include topics like fighting organised crime, protection of the environment and sustainable development, economy including tourism and small and medium enterprises, maritime cooperation and also culture and education. This initiative provides deepening of cooperation

among its member states around both seas and makes sustained contributions to the stabilization and democratization of South Eastern Europe.

Mr. Chairman,

Slovenia very much supports the institutional rapprochement of OSCE with other international organisations and institutions that are dealing with all aspects of security in order to attain better coordination and cohesion of their activities. Close interaction can only add to the international efforts to strengthen security and stability. The enlargement of EU and NATO in 2004 is a major security investment in our area and creates new avenues for closer cooperation in the framework of the OSCE. We look forward to the common efforts of international organizations and institutions to prevent and combat future threats and to improve all dimensions of the security of our people.

As the future member of the OSCE Troika Slovenia intends to advocate the effective application of the Strategy we have adopted here in Maastricht. Also, we will be striving to build upon it so as to maintain and strengthen the relevance of the OSCE's work in the coming years. We wish a successful work to the Bulgarian Chairmanship and we assure the incoming Chairman-in-Office of our full cooperation.

Thank you.