



Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

**Report by the
OSCE Secretary General,
Ambassador Marc Perrin de Brichambaut,
at the 17th OSCE Ministerial Council Meeting**

**Athens
2 December 2009**

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

In your inaugural speech, you reminded us that Greek foreign policy is driven by the same values that underpin the OSCE. Respect for international law, human rights and fundamental freedoms, a belief in a rules-based international order, the pursuit of honest and open dialogue – your Chairmanship has paid tribute to these values. On behalf of the OSCE family, I take this opportunity to thank you and your team in Athens and Vienna for your dedication and tireless work.

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Ministerial Councils are moments for the OSCE participating States to re-engage with the ambitious approach to security they have crafted together and to rekindle new consistency of purpose. They are also an opportunity to take stock of the year that has passed, and to decide on new directions of action.

This meeting of the Ministerial Council is different.

It is different, because of the depth of the challenges that have arisen to co-operative security in the OSCE area in the last few years – diverging interpretations of basic OSCE principles, the use of force on the continent, the open wounds of still unresolved conflicts, the impact of a financial and economic crisis. It is different also, because a new pan-European dialogue has opened between the participating States within the framework of the OSCE. This dialogue has been frank and wide-ranging. It has been inclusive in participation and innovative in scope.

The Greek Chairmanship has led from the front. The informal meeting in Corfu launched an exploratory process that has engaged all Permanent Representatives in Vienna and all parts of the OSCE, including the RFOM, the ODIHR and the HCNM and the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, as well as the academic

community. In Corfu, Ministers declared the next step to be Athens. This is where we stand today.

This is not business as usual. In the history of this Organisation, there have been similar moments when the participating States needed a place to clear the ground to rebuild the foundations of pan-European security. Such moments occurred in Helsinki and Geneva, in Paris and Istanbul. The participating States face a similar moment today.

The Corfu Process holds this promise. Twenty years after the fall of the Berlin Wall, the OSCE area needs stock-taking. The participating States need an open and ambitious dialogue to rebuild trust and to restore the basis for common purpose. Security in Europe and the security of Europe need this.

This is the stake of this Ministerial Council meeting. A qualitative shift has started, the participating States must now move forward, in the spirit of co-operation and dialogue. Athens is a moment for the participating States to engage anew with the responsibility imposed by their vision of building a unified space across the OSCE area on the principle of common, comprehensive and indivisible security.

OSCE Ministers must now take vital decisions on how the dialogue should continue and the topics that will be the focus of structured negotiations. A roadmap should be drawn up now. Directions and expectations should be coherent.

The participating States must now engage with key pressure points in the foundations of pan-European security – to renew adherence with the basic principles of State behaviour and interaction, to restore trust in pan-European arms control and CSBMs, to foster action on early warning and progress in conflict settlement, to enhance the implementation of OSCE commitments across all Dimensions, including on human rights, fundamental freedoms and the rule of law, and to forge new approaches for tackling transnational threats and challenges, including those from Afghanistan.

Developing these chapter headings requires structured dialogue that draws on existing structures and decision-making bodies, each according to its respective mandate and expertise, under the leadership of the Permanent Representatives in Vienna. Our aims must now be practical. Just as in Corfu when the political impulse provided by Ministers was vital, the dialogue will require deep engagement from the participating States, from experts and capitals.

The proposal to consider holding OSCE summit at an appropriate time follows this logic. The proposal is an invitation to all to show that the OSCE has the potential to deliver effective security to its members, to offer a set of effective negotiating *fora* and to make a difference in addressing concrete and practical security challenges. At the right time, a summit could act as a beacon of visibility, a catalyst for political will and a source of inspiration for the work of the OSCE.

The Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian area is rich in formats for security co-operation. Taking forward the dialogue will require parallel movement in different formats on different issues. Privileged discussions will occur in the OSCE itself, but also through bilateral tracks between participating States and within other organisations.

The OSCE is well placed to serve as a clearing house for a dialogue that will involve many moving pieces. The OSCE can work among and in co-ordination with other international organizations. It has excellent relationships with the UN, the EU, NATO, and the Council of Europe. The presence of the EU, NATO, the Commonwealth of Independent States and the Collective Security Treaty Organization in Corfu was a precedent that can be developed to secure the contribution of other organisations to the new structured dialogue. On the basis of the 1999 Platform for Co-operative Security, the OSCE can help to promote coherence as the participating States seek to advance their dialogue in multiple channels.

The continuation of the European security dialogue in the OSCE should also see the involvement of our Partners for Co-operation, both Asian and Mediterranean. All of them have a stake in this dialogue and a contribution to make. We should be proud that OSCE experience, our values and principles, continue to be an inspiration to our Partners and other regions. The most recent application by Australia to become an OSCE Partner for Co-operation is the best illustration of such interest. I hope the OSCE family would welcome Australia as a Partner for Co-operation, while Australia would bring new perspectives to the OSCE Partnership.

Rest assured that the Secretariat and the Institutions stand ready to support the decisions adopted by the OSCE Foreign Ministers.

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Restoring trust requires co-operation in addressing key security challenges facing the OSCE participating States.

The role of the OSCE in creating the conditions for settling the unresolved conflicts is a case in point. In Athens, Ministers will have to answer questions about how to make the most of the OSCE in building bridges between communities that remain divided. Conflict settlement cannot flow only from the ink on peace agreements. It must be built also from the ground-up. Under the guidance of the participating States, the OSCE can do more to pursue these objectives.

The OSCE remains dedicated to supporting lasting peace and security for the benefit of all peoples in Georgia and the region. This year, the Organization has worked hand in hand with the UN and the EU in co-chairing the Geneva

Discussions. This unified international effort is vital. The process is halting, but it is producing results, in the creation of the Incident Prevention and Response Mechanisms and on issues of water and gas supply. These are important steps, but much hard work remains ahead.

There is still much that the OSCE can do to consolidate the institutions of democracy and the rule of law in Georgia and the region. Agreeing on the deployment of a renewed field presence and new activities on the ground is an integral part of the new dialogue on European security.

In the new dialogue on European security, many participating States have underlined the need to respond more effectively to threats arising from outside the OSCE area. The challenge of stability in Afghanistan and the threats emanating from this country have been noted in particular.

Two years have passed since OSCE Foreign Ministers agreed to deepen OSCE engagement with Afghanistan. The OSCE has moved forward since Madrid. In May, the OSCE opened a Border Management Staff College in Dushanbe, Tajikistan. This flagship project will enhance the capacities of border security and management agencies, both in Central Asia and in Afghanistan, as well as throughout the OSCE area. The OSCE is assisting Tajikistan in improving border patrols and customs capabilities, in order to combat trafficking of weapons and drugs through Tajikistan from Afghanistan. The Organisation is promoting co-operation in these fields between Tajik and Afghan personnel. The OSCE has launched a Customs Training Facility in Kyrgyzstan to train national and regional customs officers together with their Afghan counterparts.

More ambitious projects have been developed in consultation with relevant international actors. Their implementation is contingent upon political consensus among the OSCE participating States, the security situation on the ground and the availability of funds. The Kazakh Chairmanship may provide an excellent opportunity to strengthen OSCE engagement with the stability of Afghanistan, as this has been identified as a priority for their Chairmanship.

OSCE Foreign Ministers will discuss also the role of the Organisation in fostering a stronger dialogue on key themes of the Economic and Environmental Dimension. There is a potential to facilitate dialogue between countries when differences exist that could have an impact on the security and well-being of local communities. The issue of water management may be one such issue.

At the informal meeting in Corfu, many Ministers underlined the importance of addressing the questions raised by energy security. In the *OSCE Strategy Document for the Economic and Environmental Dimension*, adopted in Maastricht in 2003, the participating States committed themselves to ensuring a predictable, reliable, economically acceptable, commercially sound and environmentally friendly energy supply, achieved by means of long-term contracts where appropriate.

Respectful of other formats and organisations, the OSCE can facilitate the creation of networks for international dialogue on aspects of the complex challenge of energy security. The OSCE can be useful in raising the awareness of problems, and in exploring new approaches for co-operation -- for instance regarding aspects of the legal framework for energy. The Conference on "Strengthening Energy Security in the OSCE Area," held in Bratislava on June 6-7, 2009, was a good first step.

The United Nations Climate Change Conference opens next week in Copenhagen. The OSCE will continue as a regional organisation to support implementation of relevant resolutions taken in the framework of the United Nations.

Many participating States have underlined the importance of the Human Dimension in the new dialogue on European security.

The OSCE participating States are bound together by shared values that find expression in agreed founding documents and rich array of commitments. OSCE commitments are politically-binding, and they are unambiguous in their intent to forge common security through co-operation. To the extent that they have been reached through consensus, all participating States are unequivocally bound to work towards their implementation.

The participating States have created the OSCE Secretariat, the High Commissioner on National Minorities, the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media and the Parliamentary Assembly to support them in this process. The OSCE Field Operations work every day to help States implement their commitments across the three dimensions.

In the framework of the new dialogue, the participating States may wish to consider strengthening the mechanisms to support the implementation of commitments on such flagship issues as election observation and freedom of the media, as well as new tools for work in such areas as the rule of law.

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

At a time when the role of the OSCE is being rediscovered, it is my duty as Chief Administrative Officer to highlight issues that concern the running of the Organization. This is especially important in light of current budgetary challenges, not least due to the global economic downturn. All OSCE executive structures will continue to implement with utmost efficiency and effectiveness the takings set by the participating States. However, your support in terms of resources is indispensable.

Three years ago in Brussels, the participating States adopted key decisions regarding the management of the OSCE. The Organization has devoted significant

effort to introduce Performance-Based Programme Budgeting. This results-oriented management methodology is now in place, and further steps will seek its full application and refinement. In essence, this is a response to an environment of shrinking resources – an attempt to achieve more impact with less means.

The current budgetary framework is out of sync with the high expectations placed on the OSCE by the participating States. Since 2004, the year after the adoption of the *OSCE Strategy to Address Threats to Security and Stability in the 21st Century*, the OSCE has seen a downward and no-growth trend in its total budget. Of the last eight budgets, only the 2006 Unified Budget was adopted on time. This trend has an adverse effect on OSCE credibility, effectiveness and continuity of operations, as well as on the morale of its staff.

The management of human resources is vital for the good health of the Organisation. The OSCE attracts and retains staff of highest professional standards, with due respect to geographic and gender balance, in accordance also with the 2004 OSCE Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality. However, the high turnover rate, in particular among seconded personnel, has a negative impact on the continuity and cost-effectiveness of our work.

This year, I addressed the participating States with two strong appeals. In March, I called for action to preserve the effectiveness of the secondment system, highlighting the challenges of a heavy reliance on seconded staff. Since then, I have been pleased to see renewed attention by the participating States to maintaining the effectiveness of this system. In May, I made proposals to strengthen consistency in the management of human resources by streamlining and harmonizing the periods of service in the OSCE, while preserving its non-career nature. These proposals are currently being discussed. I hope for the support of the participating States.

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

For close to thirty five years, the OSCE has proved itself as a laboratory of ideas and instruments for tackling complex threats to security. All of the participating States come together united by history and geography, as well as by shared fundamental beliefs about how they should behave towards each other and how they should conduct their internal affairs.

OSCE commitments are a dynamic and living body, constantly being tailored to address new challenges and refined to fit the changing face of old ones. The OSCE is a political forum, whose vitality derives from the political will engaged in its workings by each of you.

I look forward to the new political impulse that will result from your deliberations and to the dedication of the future Chairman-in-Office in taking this forward in 2010.