

STATEMENT
IN RESPONSE TO THE REPORT OF THE PANEL OF EMINENT
PERSONS ON STRENGTHENING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE OSCE
delivered by
Vesko Garčević, Ambassador of Serbia and Montenegro
at
the 561th Meeting of the Permanent Council, 30 Jun 2005

Mr Chairman,

We would like to welcome the distinguished members of the Panel of the eminent persons at today's Permanent Council meeting. Regrettably, we have a sad occasion to join others and pay tribute to ambassador Fanasievski and in this way, post festum, thank him for his active support and devotion to the work of the Panel and work of the OSCE as well. At the same time, we would like to express our deep condolences to his country and members of his family.

We commend the Panel for the accomplishment of such considerable work in due time and the Chairman in Office for the fashion how it met the commitments deriving from the Ministerial in Sofia. We believe that this well structured, insightful and analytical report with recommendations will serve as a good basis for upcoming thorough and conducive deliberation on the prospects and future character of the OSCE. The fact that today before us we have a document agreed upon by all the members of the Panel represents an impetus, a positive message for our future consideration of the proposed recommendations.

The last decade of the 20th century brought about by major changes in the international community, reflected in the disappearance of the bipolar world and the emergence and development of integration processes. Cooperation has become a vital prerequisite for the strengthening of peace, stability and democratic development. However, the cooperation process has also been accompanied by a number of phenomena that gave a rise to regional and local tensions and conflicts. The danger of traditional military conflicts and confrontations may indeed have been reduced, but on the other hand, a host of new military and non-military challenges, risks and threats has emerged.

Since its birth in Helsinki 30 years ago, the OSCE has served as an instrumental European mechanism for building up security and stability, strengthening universal human rights standards and values, cooperation in a various areas aimed at diffusing tensions and potential conflicts within its boundaries. The due respect for commitments made in Helsinki Final Act, the Paris Charter and Moscow document, remains as valid today as 30 or 15 years ago, at the same time the new environment in Europe entails a reformed and revitalized OSCE. The OSCE, for sure, has been facing serious difficulties and challenges that have a large impact on its political relevance. By reforming itself this Organization can demonstrate, once again, its flexibility, responsiveness and modern character what is a very substance of the OSCE from the moment when it was born.

Allow me to remind you on the fact that former Federal Socialist Republic of Yugoslavia hosted one of the historical CSCE conferences in Belgrade in 1977/78. That fact has inspired us to pay high attention to the issue of the OSCE reform and looking forward to taking active part in upcoming consultations and discussions. Although the fact that constructive and focused discussion is to take place in coming months, at this stage, we would like to underline that our attention, as yours, is attached to the OSCE reform core issues – mandate and division of responsibilities between the CiO and Secretary General, the strength and political nature of the Permanent Council, character of our decision-making process and particularly the role, spirit and mandate of the OSCE field operations. Therefore, the idea of the Chairmen in Office to organize high-level consultation in September 12 and 13 enjoy our full support. We consider that meeting a significant event on our current reform path that will, hopefully, deliver fresh and inspiring ideas, comments and proposals based upon the presented Panel's report.