



Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

Intervention by Secretary General Thomas Greminger

High-level Meeting on Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace

“Interactive Dialogue II – Strengthening the UN’s Work on Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace in the Field”

New York, 24 April 2018

**Madame Moderator,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I am delighted to be here today. I wish to thank President Lajčák for the invitation.

Secretary-General Guterres has rightly called for a “surge in diplomacy for peace”. I am fully behind his effort to put prevention and peacebuilding front and center.

I think we are all too aware of the current challenges to international peace and security. So I will not dwell on them.

But precisely because there are so many issues on the UN’s plate at the moment, there is all the more need to make effective use of regional arrangements.

With that in mind, let me (briefly) highlight five areas where I think the OSCE can contribute most effectively to the UN’s work on building and sustaining peace in the field.

First, conflict prevention. The OSCE has a proven track record in conflict prevention. Over the past 25 years, we have developed a well-equipped tool box of institutions and mechanisms for early warning and early action. These include the High Commissioner on National Minorities, fact-finding missions, and the preventive diplomacy of our field operations, for example in the Balkans.

Second, conflict settlement. Article 52 of Chapter VIII of the UN Charter encourages regional arrangements (like the OSCE) to develop the pacific settlement of local disputes. This we do through the ‘5+2’ format dealing with the Transdniestrian settlement process, the Minsk process on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, and (together with the EU and the UN) in the Geneva International Discussions on the consequences of the 2008 conflict in Georgia. The OSCE also chairs the Trilateral Contact Group which is seeking a diplomatic resolution to the conflict in certain regions of eastern Ukraine. These are some good examples of joint regional action. Hopefully the OSCE’s efforts can take some pressure off the Security Council.

Third, building and sustaining peace in the field. The OSCE's 16 field operations in Eastern Europe, South East Europe and Central Asia are among our strongest peacebuilding tools. Our biggest and most high-profile mission at the moment is the Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine. It is comprised of close to 800 civilian observers from more than 40 countries, working in a hostile environment to monitor the cease-fire. The Mission has benefitted from specialized UN expertise and advice on the use of technical means such as satellite pictures, use of UAVs, cameras and other technical means. There is scope for further cooperation, not least if the UN were to deploy a peace operation in the Donbas region of Ukraine.

This kind of partnership is not entirely new. Take for example UN-OSCE cooperation in Kosovo. Linked to Security Council Resolution 1244, the OSCE Mission in Kosovo was established as a distinct but constituent component within UNMIK. It had a clear lead in establishing key democratic institutions such as the Kosovo Judicial Institute, the Central Election Commission, the Ombudsperson, and the Kosovo Police Service School. It continues to play an active role today.

Fourth, structural prevention. In the spirit of SDG 16, the OSCE promotes peace, justice and strong institutions. The OSCE's Office on Democratic Institutions and Human Rights helps states to enhance their national capacity to protect fundamental freedoms, uphold the rule of law, and enact good governance. OSCE field activities help foster robust democratic institutions, facilitate dialogue and reconciliation processes, strengthen people-to-people contacts, and promote tolerance and non-discrimination. In our field work, we strive to make sure that conflict resolution strategies take into account areas where civil-society actors and "peace constituents", including women, youth, and faith-based groups, may best contribute possible solutions through localized approaches. Experience shows that such an inclusive approach is vital for sustaining peace.

My fifth and final point is partnerships. The OSCE is a cooperative inter-state organization. In the long term, the work of our executive structures can only be successful with the buy-in of the states involved. That is why it is important for our field activities to have good relations with the host countries.

But there are other constituencies as well, like parliamentarians and civil society.

Furthermore, the OSCE seldom acts alone. There are usually several other international actors on the ground. Which is why partnerships in the field are vital.

And speaking of partnership, we hope to further strengthen our cooperation with the UN in the areas of peacebuilding and sustaining peace which are core activities of the OSCE and where, I believe, we have significant experience, unique institutions and operations, and added value.

Thank you for your attention.