



Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

Secretary General Lamberto Zannier

Statement on “The Role of the OSCE in Ensuring European Security”

**Conference on Politico-Military Aspects of European Security
Hosted by the Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation**

Moscow, 23 May 2013

Mr. Minister,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to thank our Russian hosts for providing this welcome opportunity to advance the dialogue on security in Europe. In the OSCE we know well how dialogue helps to foster trust and confidence among States and to bridge persistent differences, which in turn helps us address common threats to security.

Two years from now, the OSCE will celebrate the 40th anniversary of the signing of the Helsinki Accords, a historic triumph of co-operation over conflict. In 1975 the priority was to avoid a conflict between the two opposing blocs. Today the nature of threats to European security is dramatically different. We no longer live in fear of a continent-wide war. In this era of globalization and economic hardship, there is growing recognition of shared security concerns. We thus recognize the need for a comprehensive approach to security that encompasses not only the military-political dimension, but also the economic-environmental and human dimensions. This is also a central legacy of the Helsinki Accords.

Today the OSCE is reaffirming this commitment to comprehensive security and redefining the security agenda in light of contemporary challenges in our region. The overarching goal of this debate is to realize the vision set forth at the 2010 Astana Summit of “a free,

democratic, common and indivisible Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian security community (...), rooted in agreed principles, shared commitments and common goals.”

The OSCE’s greatest strengths are our comprehensive approach to security, our inclusiveness, our permanent dialogue and our consensus-based decision-making. But we need to update and reform our working procedures and structures to better meet the challenges of our time. Today the OSCE faces a complex security agenda that encompasses transnational threats, protracted conflicts, post-conflict rehabilitation, assisting peaceful democratic transitions and advancing security in the politico-military area.

As we move forward, we are striving to achieve better balance among the three dimensions and complete the reform of the organization. Our increasingly complex and multifaceted agenda, however, makes consensus-building more difficult.

In today’s globalized world, security is no longer a zero-sum game. States cannot confront transnational threats like terrorism, drug trafficking and cyber-security challenges alone. We are all in it together: strengthening the security of one benefits the whole community. The OSCE is working on conceptualizing and operationalizing its role in addressing transnational threats, including new cyber-security/ICT challenges. This calls for greater operational interaction among international organizations, beginning with the UN. Co-operating with other regional security organizations like CSTO, SCO and CARICC has also become crucial to confronting these challenges effectively.

In Astana, OSCE participating States recognized that the security of our region is “inextricably linked” with that of neighbouring regions. As a result, we are strengthening our relationship with our Partners for Co-operation in Asia and the Mediterranean. Last year Mongolia, which had been one of our Partners, became a participating State.

We are also developing a more strategic approach to our larger neighbourhood, especially toward Afghanistan, with a strong role for Russia and the Central Asian States and close cooperation with regional institutions. In the Mediterranean region, we cannot ignore the conflict in Syria, which is already having a direct impact on Turkey’s security.

Within the OSCE region, various groups of countries address their defense needs within organizations such as CSTO, NATO and the EU. But the OSCE remains the only organization that covers the whole region, including countries that are not members of any alliance, and addresses security comprehensively. In the past, the OSCE has served as a forum for dialogue among defense organizations—and we can still do this and perhaps even moreso in the future.

The OSCE is also ready to play a significant role in reinvigorating the conventional arms control process through an inclusive debate. And this discussion has begun. In February, we convened a special Forum for Security Co-operation session on conventional arms control. In March, we hosted a “Security Days” event on the same topic.

Conventional arms control in Europe is widely seen as an historic success. But even in the new circumstances, the OSCE region is no less in need of modern arms control and CSBM arrangements today than in previous decades.

True, the initial CFE objective of reducing an impressive amount of TLE has been accomplished. On the other hand, the current impasse in conventional arms control is creating a growing lack of confidence and trust among OSCE participating States, and this undermines security. Military stability, transparency and predictability cannot be taken for granted. Still today, there is a need for assurances of military stability, transparency and confidence building. But we need greater political engagement to move the process forward.

We do not need to reinvent the wheel. The existing instruments—the Adapted CFE, the Vienna Document, the Open Skies Treaty—though in need of modernization, provide a solid foundation on which to build a new conventional arms control regime. But we do need a degree of creativity—and flexibility—to move forward. And a successful process of discussion will be beneficial in itself.

Given the evolution of geostrategic relationships in Europe, what we may need now is a rather diversified regime. It could even be a mix of political and legal arrangements to provide flexibility. The goal would be to preserve and further promote strategic restraint in the conventional field from the Atlantic to the Urals.

This perhaps more political and declaratory strategic engagement, which might take into account certain elements in the Adapted CFE, could be complemented by stricter arrangements to strengthen security in particular regions. One could also consider—subject to the interest of all regional countries—gradually expanding the current CFE purview to cover additional regions, such as the Baltics and/or the Western Balkans.

Yet, I must emphasize that arms control is not a tool for conflict resolution. It does not offer a solution to contentious territorial disputes, although it can encourage the resolution of long-term conflicts through limitations, predictability and transparency. Still, arms control cannot and should not be made hostage to conflict resolution.

Confidence building through meaningful transparency measures, continuous exchanges of information and verification also remains important. Although verification is costly, it is an investment in stability. We can look for ways to lower the cost of verification, for instance through a more open and horizontal approach to multinational verification teams.

Conventional arms control is integral to the OSCE's comprehensive and co-operative concept of security. It should be considered an important pillar of the security framework we are working toward, and should be included more firmly in the framework of our current debates.

In concluding, I look forward to an open and frank discussion of this issue, and on the larger role of the OSCE in the current European security environment, in the afternoon session.

Thank you.