

Statement at the OSCE Permanent Council
Minister Solomon Passy
3 March 2005
OSCE: Vision for the Future

ENGLISH only

Dear Ambassadors,
Dear Secretary General,
Ladies and Gentlemen!

I am pleased to address the OSCE Permanent Council, this time in the capacity of a Minister of Foreign Affairs of Bulgaria and a member of the OSCE Troika. And I am delighted to address you today, on 3rd March, which is the National Day of Bulgaria. The 2005 anniversaries related to the Helsinki process are a good occasion to take stock of what has been done and to revisit the role, the place and the contents of the OSCE.

The Sofia Ministerial gave us clear indications on what remains to be resolved. Advancing into the new century, the OSCE has found itself at a crossroad. Regardless of what we call them – symptoms or consequences, the developments within the Organization in the recent months have imperatively put the question of how OSCE should change. Having solid grounds for satisfaction with our achievements, we should not indulge in complacency. At the same time, the reasons for certain dissatisfaction should not generate destructive criticism and prevent us from efforts to improve the OSCE.

Certainly, if you don't know where you're going, you'll wind up somewhere else. I would, therefore, try to reflect on the role of the OSCE and the way ahead as I see it.

In many ways the OSCE has already laid a sound basis to step upon, especially with the refocusing of its activities in the recent years.

Assistance in reforming is at the core of the OSCE activities. That is why any effort to transform the OSCE should preserve this underlying principle. Reform should not be an end in itself but should rather be a process designed to improve the ability of the organization to help participating States to adapt themselves to contemporary changes.

We should, however, ensure that the OSCE *acquis* in the human dimension remains intact. It should not be affected by our efforts to change the balance between the various activities or to readjust the functional and geographic focus of the OSCE. The issues related to the fundamental human rights, elections, tolerance and non-discrimination, national minorities will be steadily present on the OSCE agenda as the respective commitments jointly undertaken by the participating States form an indispensable part of what is so often referred to as “the OSCE common values”. We are very proud of the results of the events on tolerance and non-discrimination in 2004.

The elections in Ukraine, Afghanistan, Palestine and Iraq brought new perspectives for stability and security. OSCE contributed to the success in Ukraine, Afghanistan and

Palestine. However, we missed the opportunity to identify our Organisation with the success of the elections in Iraq. Of course, any Organization has to mature to the level of decisions that have a long-term impact on its identity. Notwithstanding the various degree of OSCE involvement in the above-mentioned elections, the respective countries are now closer to the values of the Organization. And this makes a difference. We shall have to also respond to the application of the Palestinian Authority to acquire partnership status.

We have agreed in Maastricht that threats and challenges are constantly evolving and require a cross-dimensional response. This calls for greater emphasis on building democratic institutions, making legal and law enforcement systems democratically efficient, strengthening the structure of civil societies, constantly enhancing the freedom of the media. This is the unique niche for the OSCE, which has already acquired the capacity and the knowledge to perform with success in these areas. OSCE has the capacity to help in building democratic institutions worldwide and we should not keep this universal knowhow for use only inside our family.

In recent years we have witnessed many calls for maintaining the right balance in OSCE activities. Undoubtedly this is a very relevant factor for the future role of the OSCE. Nevertheless we need to take into account that this balance cannot be formalistic or strictly numerical. Balance should be measured by what is achieved in certain dimensions and what still needs to be achieved in others. Guided by such philosophy, in 2004 we proposed that OSCE should redirect attention and resources to the East of the Black Sea and strengtnen the trans-Black Sea dialogue. The recent events in Ukraine proved we were right.

What is being called a balance has also shifted even within the different dimensions. If we look into the Political and Military Dimension alone we need to recognize that traditional Confidence and Security Building Measures no longer play a prevailing role as it was at the beginning of the 1990-es. Today OSCE participating States have to counter terrorism, organized crime and related activities. Accordingly in recent years the politico-military dimension of the OSCE has moved into qualitatively new areas such as Small Arms and Light Weapons, ammunition or border security and management.

We need also to recognize the obvious regarding the Economic and Environmental Dimension. Its evolution has gone a long way since the Helsinki's Final Act's 'second basket'. From the very start it has been clear that the OSCE shall never be a development organization, and neither its design nor resources are tailored to that. The focus of the Economic and Environmental Dimension has become support to countries in transition in their reform efforts. An important step in this direction is assisting the countries in the creation of the legal and institutional framework of functioning free market economies.

Questions have been also raised about the balance within field operations as well as between the activities in the field and at HQ and institutions level. What we really have to face is the need for providing even greater support to OSCE field operations in

view of the cross-dimensional and constantly evolving nature of the tasks that they have been entrusted with. Their mandates reflect the areas where as agreed with host countries priority assistance is essential. At the same time OSCE field operations are expected as a rule to provide assistance to their host countries for the implementation of the overall OSCE *acquis*.

And let me point out that whatever new balance and priorities are defined they should be matched with the necessary resources.

In brief over the last 15 years there have been fundamental changes in the OSCE area, which through the joint decision-making of all participating States have also been reflected by changes in the scope and direction of OSCE activities.

In a world of multilateralism and growing mutual dependence the OSCE could not proceed on its own. There is an increasing demand both among the participating States and the organizations they belong to for better interaction between the international actors in the OSCE area. I would particularly stress the co-operation with the EU and NATO. The OSCE has an institutionalized cooperation with most of those actors but in operational terms the latter still lags behind to the detriment of the OSCE itself.

The same concept of interdependency in security has driven the OSCE into extensive partnership with countries from adjacent regions. Extending the OSCE norms and values to the adjacent regions is one of the promising tracks. We are encouraged to see that there is a growing interest among countries out of the OSCE area to get into the orbit of the OSCE. I am heartened that various representatives of Mongolia have been expressing their appreciation of acquiring an OSCE partnership status. As a chairman of the Contact Group with the Asian Partners Bulgaria will strive to ensure new substance of the partnership relations. As I have stated on different occasions, it's my strong conviction that the OSCE is well-suited to serve as bridge between the Euro-Atlantic, the Mediterranean and the Asian security spaces. And this is yet another proof of the globalization of the mission of the OSCE.

At present OSCE goes through hard times trying to reconcile within itself the diverging views of its participating States on a number of issues, including the vital issue of the scales of assessment and the budget.

Pessimists define the difficulties we face as crisis and speak about the end of the OSCE. Belonging to the school of thought that perceives difficulties as opportunities, I would disagree with them. I would rather speak about the issue of relevance which recurrently challenges any living structure. The relevance and reform of the Organization should, therefore, be addressed in a timely and constructive fashion with due consideration to the identity of the Organization. I see this identity in the evolving nature of the OSCE, its flexibility, comprehensive approach to security and ability to respond to emerging threats and challenges. It is what keeps the OSCE unique, needed and vigorous. Based on that, we have the opportunity to translate better into operational terms the principles and values of the OSCE – in short, to ensure its relevance in the new environment.

This would be my message to you: “Think positively about the OSCE”. Only then a change qualifies for success since it is measured with continuity and constructiveness. How could we make it? Through changing our own perception of the OSCE. Through strengthening the sense of ownership of participating States *vis-à-vis* the OSCE and reviving the approach to the OSCE as our common business.

Last year, during the Bulgarian Chairmanship, certain prominence was given to the issues of transforming the OSCE. The drive brought to the Sofia Ministerial decision on establishing a Panel of Eminent Persons to review the effectiveness and provide strategic vision for the OSCE in the 21st century. In that respect, I can not but express my appreciation that Minister Rupel so timely took steps to establish the Panel. I hope that their work, which started two weeks ago, will reinforce and add substance to this kind of messages. I wish the Slovenian Chairmanship and the Panel success in this important undertaking. And I will make some concrete suggestions to the Panel.

As a believer in the importance and bright prospects of the OSCE I state the readiness of Bulgaria to assume the Chairmanship of the Organization in 2014.

Thank you.