



**LIETUVOS RESPUBLIKOS NUOLATINĖ ATSTOVYBĖ
PRIE TARPTAUTINIŲ ORGANIZACIJŲ VIENOJE**

**PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF LITHUANIA
TO THE INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS IN VIENNA**

**ADDRESS BY H.E. MR. VALDAS ADAMKUS,
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF LITHUANIA,**

**TO THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL MEETING
8 MARCH 2007**

Thank you very much. I am coming to start this unusually. May I take this opportunity to congratulate all the women here on the occasion of International Women's Day. It is not a coincidence that my visit to the OSCE has been arranged on this particular day so as to help my message reach especially your, ladies, hearts and minds.

From the outset, I wish to express Lithuania's full support to the work programme of the Spanish Chairmanship of the OSCE and to its well balanced approach based on priorities, perseverance and patience.

Mr. Chairman,
Mr. Secretary General,
Distinguished Ambassadors,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

There is an idea that I cherish deeply and I believe we all do. That is the idea of building a 'Europe whole and free' and a Europe that is at peace with itself.

I have always held this idea dear to my heart and it is one that makes the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe unique.

Founded on the vision of inclusiveness and working together to build our Continent whole and free, the OSCE stretches from Vancouver to Vladivostok, reaching from the Caspian to the Baltic seas, from Canada to Central Asia. This vision, which has always been the driving force behind the Organization, remains inspiring and unique.

Inspiring also, because the job is not done completely.

We have come a long way from the difficult days of Helsinki 1975. Europe has been set on a clear course, walls of mistrust have been brought down, families have been reunited and wars have been extinguished. The Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe played a crucial role in catalyzing democratic transformations. The Helsinki Groups that emerged in many places heralded the determination to live in a democratic society and hope that this goal was within reach.

Foreign troops have been withdrawn from a number of states, including Lithuania.

The Charter of Paris of 1990 set forth a vision for a New Greater Europe, starting from the premise that 'Europe whole and free is calling for a new beginning.' We have come along way since Paris. However, our task is not finished and the vision is not complete.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

A common body of commitments lies at the core of the OSCE and these commitments are designed to act as a compass guiding our behavior. They are a reason for pride, but they are also a responsibility to live up to the aspirations to which we have all subscribed.

I believe that all member states recognize the need to work together in implementing the ambitious range of commitments they have entered into across the three OSCE dimensions of security. Doing so is no easy task.

For my country, the OSCE means ‘us’, not ‘us and them’. The dichotomy of ‘East of Vienna-West of Vienna’ has no meaning for us.

While much has been done to unite the OSCE area and to overcome the dividing lines of the past, we should recognize that there remain regions characterized by tensions and lack of dialogue. As long as conflicts remain unsettled in the South Caucasus and Moldova and tensions continue in parts of South Eastern Europe, we have work to do. Our joint responsibility here is to build confidence by challenging the disagreements and to ensure the security, territorial integrity and sovereignty of participating States.

The OSCE is most well known for its field operations, institutions and election observation missions led by the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights. These activities and institutions stand indeed on the frontline of the OSCE key and core mission, which is to support all of us in implementing the complex and ambitious commitments to which we have agreed. The OSCE shall continue to play an important role in Kosovo where it has its largest field operation.

Mr. Chairman,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

The idea on which the OSCE is founded is dear to all the people of Lithuania. For many years the OSCE has been our guide to democratic goals and values and it has always inspired us to action.

After having lived in imposed isolation, Lithuania has rightfully rejoined the family of Europe as a full member of the OSCE, EU and NATO. The OSCE values and commitments and the OSCE institutions helped guide us through this process. And for this, the Lithuanian people are ever grateful. And because of this, we wish to contribute more. It is this feeling of commitment that motivates us to offer our candidacy for Chairmanship of the OSCE in 2010.

For its chairmanship, Lithuania offers continuity and active engagement in promoting the implementation of OSCE commitments, encouraging regional cooperation and countering old and new threats to security and stability.

On this note, I wish to draw your attention to the following particular points of interest to my country.

First, the global challenges of the 21st century are the core business of the OSCE. Countering the threat of terrorism and organized crime, fighting discrimination and promoting tolerance, addressing the pressing issues of energy security, environmental protection and migration, and promoting freedom of movement are and will continue to be a significant part of the agenda of

the Organization. The OSCE is already active in responding to these challenges, thus confirming once again that our security is indivisible.

However, we have not yet come to the point where we can say that the OSCE's or any other regional organization's efforts alone are sufficient. For our efforts to be successful it is essential to advance the co-operation of all institutions and actors involved. Thus we are very enthusiastic about the European Union's decision to reach out towards states in Central Asia and sincerely hope that this move will be welcomed.

Indeed, we have to do more in order to understand each other better by fostering people-to-people contacts, encouraging business relations and tourism, not least, with a view to discovering the richness of cultural heritage and new opportunities of Central Asia.

The OSCE has already developed a substantive role, namely through the Secretariat, in assisting the participating States to reform their police agencies and move towards new and modern forms of policing. We support this strongly and recognize that we can perhaps do much more, particularly in considering the role of possible policing operations in protracted conflict zones.

One of the most important lessons from Lithuanian experience of the last 15-16 years has been the importance of good neighborly relations and building a region connected by strong cooperation ties at all levels. As a result, today the Baltic Sea region can be proud of its active regional institutions, people-to-people contacts and trade, even its common regional agenda. Furthermore, friendly and close ties with other sub-regions have been established and strengthened. I am proud that a series of high level meetings and conferences known as the Vilnius Process has greatly contributed to the success of this outreach effort.

Therefore we believe that the OSCE should help advance sub-regional cooperation where regional identity hardly yet exists and countries struggle to find a common ground for dialogue.

Our experience says that, while having a robust and far-reaching vision, we should start with patience and first deal with challenges that are common to all. It is worth trying, no matter how difficult the task may initially seem.

For us, the concept of regional cooperation and good neighborhood policy has been instrumental in resolving many difficult issues. A mutually acceptable agreement with Russia on passenger transit to and from the Kaliningrad region is just one but telling example. Indeed, it is through such practical and pragmatic measures that we can build a united OSCE area for states, societies and individuals.

And finally, in the OSCE we are privileged to have our Partners for Cooperation as interlocutors and collaborators in questions of shared concern. Global challenges, such as economic and social development, migration and the threat of terrorism, just to name a few, can not be dealt with effectively without partnerships we develop right here.

Mr. Chairman,
Distinguished Ambassadors,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am certain that we all can do more in creating the right conditions that will erase the dividing lines and remove the hurdles that still exist among us, both on the ground and in our minds.

We have much hard work ahead of us. We should not shy away from difficulties but draw confidence from our shared past and the challenges we have already overcome by our common resolve.

Working together, in harmony and with a shared sense of responsibility, we can come considerably closer to achieving the vision of a 'Europe whole and free' that brought us together in the first place.

The path is not easy but our shared values and commitments shall guide us along this way

Thank you very much.