



Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

Reinforced Permanent Council

November 24th 2009

OSCE Secretary General

Madame Chairperson,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Thank you for the honour of addressing this reinforced Permanent Council at this key juncture. I do not wish to take too much time away from your discussion, so for the sake of brevity, I will make three points.

My first point concerns the remarkable distance the participating States have already covered in launching a new dialogue on European security in the framework of the Corfu Process.

For this, we owe a debt of gratitude to Presidents Medvedev and Sarkozy for providing the political impetus, and to Minister Stubb for seizing the idea. In Helsinki last December, Ministers broadly agreed that the starting point for a new dialogue should be the founding principles of the Helsinki Process and the OSCE concept of security, where all dimensions of security are viewed as being complementary and mutually supportive and where the security of all is considered as indivisible.

Minister Bakoyannis and the Greek Chairmanship moved quickly to build on this foundation. The meeting in Corfu was a milestone. OSCE Foreign Ministers welcomed the opportunity to initiate a comprehensive review of the status of Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian security, using the OSCE as a privileged venue. In Corfu, there was a new

recognition that the OSCE, as Europe's most inclusive and most comprehensive security organization, could serve as one of the "anchors" for a renewed dialogue on the overall security conditions in greater Europe. The OSCE, with the 1999 Platform for Co-operative Security, has the potential to serve as a clearing house for parallel, complementary efforts taken forward in the context of other institutions. The meeting of the NATO-Russia Council at Ministerial level just before the OSCE informal ministerial meeting is a case in point.

Inspired by this success, the Greek Chairmanship organized ten informal "Corfu Process" meetings. Starting on September 8th, these meetings were the occasion for the participating States to review the common foundations of their security, the commitments they have undertaken and the mechanisms they have developed. These sessions were prepared in a highly professional way by all participants and allowed for a remarkable update of where they stand on key issues. They also provided an opportunity to refresh understandings of the commitments that the States share in seeking comprehensive, co-operative and indivisible security. Exchanges have shown also the complexity of the threats that we face, such as the lasting problems posed by unresolved conflicts as well as the fragility of societies affected by the global economic and financial crisis.

The Corfu Process has showcased what the OSCE can achieve in a review mode. It has been inclusive, allowing every participating State to gain an understanding of the debates and drawing on the advice of some independent experts. It has been comprehensive in the scope of questions addressed – starting with principles and commitments, stretching to crisis management, human rights and fundamental freedoms, and economic and environmental security. It has included input from all the components of the OSCE family, including the Institutions and the Parliamentary Assembly. And it has been informal, allowing for a free-flowing and open exchange of views. The files produced by the Chairmanship on each session are a precious tool to keep track of the ground that has been covered. This open and frank exercise has contributed to an improvement of the climate among participating States and has rekindled a yearning for a renewed sense of trust and common purpose.

This brings me to my second point. At the 17th Ministerial Council meeting in Athens, just one week from today, the participating States will have a chance to decide where they want to go next.

Questions abound: Is it desirable and possible to continue the exchanges that have taken place? Can a preliminary list of topics be drawn up that would require further attention? Is there sufficient consensus among the participating States to agree on a balanced package of issues that would reflect the particular concerns that have been voiced? Can the existing OSCE toolbox provide all the appropriate venues for the discussions to take place that would touch on different aspects of security? What relationships should be established with other organisations and channels of dialogue addressing similar questions? What is expected of the incoming Chairmanship with responsibility for steering the next steps in the process? When would be the next opportunity to take stock of progress and difficulties? In short, are the OSCE participating States ready to move ahead and enter a process of structured dialogue?

It is not the first time the participating States of CSCE and OSCE have encountered such momentous choices and had to determine on an ambitious course in support of their common security. Each time, they have managed to do so by mixing pragmatism, compromise, determination and boldness. I see no reason why today's OSCE diplomats should have less talent and wisdom than their predecessors.

There are many ways in which the topics covered by the process so far can be crystallized in clusters that reflect a sense of urgency and concrete needs. Allow me to make one suggestion in order to contribute to your discussion. It would seem that five broad chapter headings have emerged that call for further attention:

1. The reconfirmation of the basic principles guiding the behaviour and interaction of OSCE participating States, including the full body of commitments already undertaken across all OSCE dimensions; taking into account the need to complement and update these principles on a continuous basis.

2. The need for renewed collective efforts to make progress toward settling the protracted conflicts that cast a shadow over security in the OSCE area, and for preventing renewed hostilities through effective early warning and – just as important – the requisite mechanisms and political will to ensure early *action*;
3. The resumption of serious discussions in the field of arms control regimes, including the CFE Treaty, and on military transparency measures and CSBMs that are fitting for today's pan-European and sub-regional security needs;
4. New strategies to tackle transnational threats such as terrorism, human trafficking, drugs, cyber crime, environmental challenges and energy insecurity -- these efforts should also address challenges arising from outside the OSCE area, principally from Afghanistan as well as other issues relevant to our Mediterranean and Asian Partners;
5. Active support to the rule of law throughout the OSCE area, with stronger mechanisms to underpin human rights and fundamental freedoms, including freedom of the media and further support the process of democratic transition.

These headlines could form the basis for an overall agenda for a meaningful dialogue. Developing them into full chapters with detailed agendas and priorities would form the initial thrust of the new round of discussions.

Because of the cross-dimensional nature of security in our region today, the overall balance among the different efforts will have to be preserved. It is a fact that the basis for discussion is quite varied in terms of existing tools and advancement in preparations. The challenge will be the greater for those topics where new ground has to be broken and where the specific role of OSCE has to be determined. The follow-up to Corfu in Athens calls, therefore, for hard work and serious contributions from all. There can be no break or demobilisation.

To do so, OSCE will have to open a full dialogue on several fronts in preparation of possible negotiations. This is my third point.

This is also a proven strength of the CSCE / OSCE process. At important junctures in its history, the OSCE has combined in-depth discussions on well-defined topics with an overall political direction to ensure balanced and co-ordinated progress. This was the case in 1972 at Dipoli during the initial round of contacts between the 35. This was the case in subsequent negotiations in Geneva when States progressively filled the three “baskets” we’ve all come to know, plus a fourth referring to the “follow-up of the Conference”. Only through such a gradual process could they eventually identify ten core principles guiding State relations, and then bring them together in a single set of documents.

Today the participating States have a number of practical consultation formats at their disposal where all of their representatives participate together on an equal footing. The Forum for Security Cooperation has a unique mandate and experience in the field of politico-military security, as well as an established practice of co-operation with the Permanent Council. The three committees of the Permanent Council have provided their capacity to flexibly address diverse and complex issues. The Greek Chairmanship has just demonstrated the effectiveness of informal meetings created at the initiative of the Chair with the full support of the participating States. Other bodies such as the CFE Joint Consultative Group can be called upon according to their respective mandates. The PrepCom is always there should formal decisions have to be taken to move the process forward.

The main challenge in terms of procedure seems to be how to continue the ongoing process of informal discussions, which constitute the Corfu process today, while at the same time involving the OSCE’s formal formats, which ultimately will be responsible for formulating and adopting any decisions, which are the outcome of the process.

In 2010, advancing our dialogue will require simultaneous movement in many of these different formats and on many different issues. This effort will require also continuous exchanges with work in other fora such as NATO (and the NATO-Russia Council), the COE, the UN Institutions, other regional security organisations and the EU. It will require inputs from and exchanges with many networks, expert groups and NGOs. Bilateral developments between participating States are important also for maintaining a positive overall atmosphere. The 1999 Platform for Co-operative Security can be

used to promote coherence as the participating States pursue their dialogue in these multiple channels. The OSCE can realize its potential as a clearing house for ideas and proposals. It can help to promote coherence among different channels of dialogue, aiming at making them complementary and mutually reinforcing.

Combining all these elements effectively will require flexibility and creativity. Within the OSCE, each framework for dialogue will operate under its own rules and leadership. Hence, there will be a clear need for steering meetings at Ambassador's level where all the aspects of the dialogue can be regularly reviewed, co-ordinated and energised. The constant practice of the OSCE has been to put such steering bodies under the responsibility of the Chairmanship. There will also be a need for higher level meetings to endorse the work achieved in Vienna and to provide encouragement and perspective for the work of the Organization as a whole. The innovative informal Corfu Ministerial Meeting has proved that such meetings fulfil a need and can give a boost to the work of the participating States.

Indeed, one new element in our recent debate is the return of the theme of summit meetings as potential beacons of visibility, catalysts for political will and sources of inspiration for the work of the OSCE.

The beginnings of the CSCE/OSCE process saw a few such high-level meetings. However, they have become far more frequent in other organizations, with the effect that their absence among OSCE participating States has begun to cast doubt on the relevance and credibility of the Organization itself. The proponents of such meetings are, therefore, doing us a great service by calling on our Heads of State and Government to pay attention to the OSCE and what it stands for. Their call is an invitation to all to show that the OSCE has the potential to deliver effective security to its members, to offer a set of effective negotiating fora and to make a difference in addressing concrete and practical security challenges. The central challenge of the Athens Ministerial Council will be to combine the fresh drive and ambition that the proposal for a summit brings to the debate with the realities of setting forth the next stage of the Corfu Process and agreeing to achievable targets for it.

Whatever decision the Ministers adopt, rest assured that the OSCE Secretariat stands ready to provide full support as we move forward.

Madame Chairperson,
Excellencies,

Two weeks ago, we had the opportunity to hear from former German Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher on the anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall. Minister Genscher reminded us of what is possible when we are ready to provide the requisite political will. He reminded us also that the OSCE provides the participating States with a unique instrument to manage change peacefully and to address complex security challenges.

2010 will mark the 35th anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act and the 20th of the Paris Charter. Next year will see the 20th anniversary of the three OSCE keystone documents guiding its work in the politico-military, economic and human dimensions: the 1990 Vienna Document, the Bonn Document and the Copenhagen Document.

However fast the process moves, I am convinced that we are on the right track. The time has come to take stock of European security, and to chart a new, common course for the future – working on the basis of what we have achieved and within the framework of the comprehensive concept of security that the participating States have pursued together for the past 35 years.