

**Sweden**  
**Minister for Foreign Affairs,**  
**Carl Bildt**  
**16th OSCE Ministerial Council**

ENGLISH only

Mr Chairman,  
Dear Colleagues,

I wish to join previous speakers in thanking Foreign Minister Stubb for his tireless efforts and contributions as Chairman-in-Office.

Whilst my country obviously associates itself with the statement by the European Union I would also like to add some remarks from a Swedish national perspective.

These are trying times.

If some years ago there was more of confidence in a new age of stability and security in our part of the world, based to a large extent on common values, the situation today is more uncertain.

The conflict between Russia and Georgia this summer was short but serious. It showed a lack of respect for core principles of the Helsinki Final Act - the very foundation of what we are doing.

And it has thus generated a new sense of insecurity that has cast a shadow over large parts of our continent.

Whether this can be overcome or not is dependent on a number of factors - not least the full implementation of the August 12 agreement. There have been steps forward - but also steps backward; notably the recognition of the two parts of Georgia as independent states - and there are still commitments that must be honoured.

Foreign Minister Kouchner mentioned in particular the Alkhogori area, and I can only agree with him on the need for the Russian Federation to meet its commitments when it comes to the full withdrawal to the positions held prior to the onset of major hostilities on August 7.

Another important part of this relates to the OSCE Mission. We all know that it has not been able to return to South Ossetia since August - in spite of numerous commitments that this should happen.

We must assure that it can do so - and we must also make certain that the mandate of a mission in the area can be extended - the monitoring of the situation is an important basis for the continued efforts to reach a resolution to the conflicts in the region.

Throughout these ordeals, the firm, energetic and competent work of you, Mr Chairman, and your team have been a constant feature and an important factor in managing the crisis and identifying solutions to the problems.

What happened between Russia and Georgia in the summer clearly demonstrated that there is no such thing as "frozen conflicts" - there are conflicts, and until they are resolved, they remain a threat to the stability of our entire continent.

It is thus imperative that we renew our efforts to resolve the outstanding conflicts in our parts of the world - and make or utmost to make certain that new ones do not occur.

The role of the OSCE - all its different parts - remains of critical importance in this respect - let me just mention the important role of the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities. We have though to remind ourselves - in our owe interest - to make use of the expertise offered by the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights and the Office of the Representative of the Media.

The 1990's were dominated by the different conflicts in the Balkans.

We should not be blind to the mistakes we made in this region, but neither overlook the fact that there has been success in resolving nearly all of the deep-seated conflicts of this once so volatile area.

I do hope that we will be able to move the entire region towards full integration in the European Union during the years to come.

It is integration - political, economic, human - that is the true path to security in our modern age.

As we discuss the different ways of reinforcing the security of our continent in the years to come, this is a fundamental fact that must always be taken into account.

The Ten Principles of the Helsinki Final Act of 1975 as well as the Charter of Paris of 1990 remain the foundations for our work. I see no reason whatsoever to revise what was agreed then and has been accepted since - but I do see a reason to look at the extent to which we all are living up to these principles and commitments, and what could be done to improve the record in these respects.

In Paris our nations jointly stated, that "we are convinced that in order to strengthen peace and security among out States, the advancement of democracy, and respect for and effective exercise of human rights, are indispensable."

This is what makes our efforts to build true security unique in the world today. It is based not on old models of balances of power, on military deterrence or bilateral deals - but on the true integration of our societies and on the fundamental link between internal human security and external state security.

This is based on the bitter European lesson of the last century - that if the first starts to be violated, sooner or later the second will be under threat as well.

I welcome a new discussion on the ways in which we should improve and deepen our security in the future.

It should of course be based on full respect for the Helsinki Final Act and the Paris Charter, but it could well - and constructively! - focus on how we could reinforce our commitments to and our mechanism for the implementation of the security and rights of our citizens, thus strengthening the very basis for the security also of states.

This is the European way - based on the European experience.

There are numerous ways of doing this, and it involves mechanisms and instrument both within the OSCE and within other multinational organisations that we adhere to. But I do think that the wide nature of our organisation makes it a natural forum for such a discussion in the years to come.

A discussion on ways of doing this should go hand in hand with strengthening other aspects of our common work.

Let me just mention the importance that we must all attach to the issues of arms control.

We should all have a fundamental interest in a common regime of restrictions, limitations and transparency in the field of conventional armaments. Conventional arms control needs to be adapted to the new security environment, while keeping the substance of the CFE Treaty intact. I welcome the initiative of Foreign Minister Steinmeier to review a conference in this issue.

We are also looking forward to new talks between the United States and Russia on further reductions of strategic nuclear weapons - a successor to the START I treaty - as well as on other strategic issues. This is important also in view of our wider efforts to curb the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

Mr Chairman,

It is of course a particular pleasure to meet here in Helsinki. It is the cradle of our organisation.

And I can assure you, Mr Chairman, that Sweden will heed your call and do its part to renew the spirit of Helsinki. Doing this - renewing the spirit of Helsinki - is, as I see it, largely synonymous with recommitting to and upholding the values upon which our cooperation in the OSCE rest.

These values and the commitments to them by participating States makes this organization unique.

Without respect for these values and their implementation, the prospect for lasting peace from Vancouver to Vladivostok will remain precarious. This is where our common challenge lies, for the years to come.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.