

Delegation of Belarus

**STATEMENT BY  
THE PERMANENT DELEGATION OF THE REPUBLIC OF BELARUS  
TO THE OSCE AT THE 958th (SPECIAL) MEETING OF THE  
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

2 July 2013

**In response to the addresses by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of  
Switzerland and the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Serbia**

Mr. Chairperson,

We join in welcoming Mr. Didier Burkhalter, Vice President of the Swiss Federal Council and Head of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs of Switzerland, and Mr. Ivan Mrkić, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Serbia. We thank them for presenting their vision, main priorities and joint plan for the future chairmanships of the OSCE.

We note the high level of co-ordination and the evident commonality of the approaches of the two countries. We hope the idea of “consecutive” chairmanships will prove worthwhile in practice, ensure proper continuity in the OSCE’s activities and enable effective strategic planning for the future as well as the setting and solution of long-term tasks.

We welcome the focus of our Swiss and Serbian colleagues on a unifying agenda and their willingness to work together pragmatically in the interests of our Organization and all of its participating States. This is extremely important for the ultimate success of the Helsinki+40 process begun this year, which is intended to facilitate the development of a genuine security community in the OSCE area and the strengthening of our Organization.

There is no doubt that there are objective and subjective complications with regard to overcoming trust deficits between participating States and to solving accumulated problems. However, no matter how complex, the only right path lies in holding an open, constructive and mutually respectful dialogue. The role of the chairmanships in this cannot be overestimated.

We are pleased to note the understanding of both future chairmanships of the need for reform and increased effectiveness of the OSCE. In this regard we expect specific practical steps in the development and adoption of an OSCE Charter in 2014–2015, a genuine strengthening of the first and second OSCE “baskets”, the optimization of the human dimension and an improvement in the consultative and budget processes.

We agree with the position of the future chairmanships on the key priorities in the politico-military dimension. Our joint efforts must be aimed at ensuring an effective conventional arms control regime in Europe, a qualitative updating of the Vienna Document 2011 and the stepping up of work on non-proliferation and small arms and light weapons.

“Frozen” regional conflicts remain a serious threat to security in the OSCE area and require the utmost vigilance. Facilitating their speedy resolution and further strengthening the whole toolkit and increasing the effectiveness of the OSCE’s work within the “conflict cycle” are the most important tasks at present.

We support the general trend of a shift in the focus of the OSCE’s activity towards countering transnational threats and challenges to security. We are confident that this approach is in line with contemporary realities. Our Organization has a solid framework of commitments in the area of counter-terrorism, the drug threat and trafficking in human beings, as well as in the development of police co-operation and ensuring border security. At this stage, we believe it is important to ensure that the corresponding OSCE conceptual framework documents are duly implemented, among other things through the development of the practical activities of the specialized units in the Secretariat. We trust that general approaches and specific measures will also be developed in the future to counter the above-mentioned threats as well as other threats in cyberspace.

Much has been said recently about the importance of raising the profile and efficiency of the OSCE’s economic and environmental dimension. We fully support this view, since issues of good governance, socio-economic development, energy security and environmental protection have a direct impact on every human being, their quality of life and their prosperity. We firmly believe that additional efforts in these areas will be required of the OSCE and that these efforts will make a genuine practical contribution to the sustainable development and stability of our countries. We therefore support the theme proposed by Switzerland for the 2014 Economic and Environmental Forum focusing on overcoming environmental threats to security.

The lack of unified approaches to human rights issues within the OSCE is undoubtedly having an effect on the Organization’s success in this sphere. In view of the negative experience of recent years, we believe that future chairmanships should take a balanced approach to developing their priorities in the “third basket” and should focus on subjects with a “common denominator”. We consider that such issues could be trafficking in human beings, ensuring freedom of movement, human rights education, youth policy and protecting the rights of children. It is also important to continue the dialogue on election observation, as this work, which is now one of the main areas of the OSCE’s work in the human dimension, needs to be improved and harmonized.

Mr. Chairperson,

Switzerland and Serbia were among the originators of the Helsinki process. We value their contribution to the work of our Organization and to European security as a whole. We firmly believe that the experience and professionalism of Swiss and Serbian diplomacy, the faith of both countries in the OSCE and its future, their commitment to the principles of dialogue and their multilateral collective approach to problem-solving will enable all the outlined plans to be implemented and will lead to a positive result in the interests of all participating States.

In conclusion, we should like to wish the distinguished Ministers a successful conclusion to their preparations for the coming chairmanships and to assure them of the support of Belarus in our joint efforts to strengthen security and stability in the OSCE region.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.