



Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

Secretary General Lamberto Zannier

Opening Remarks

2014 Annual Security Review Conference

Vienna, 24 June 2014

President Burkhalter,
Minister Dacic,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Allow me to add my welcome to all participants, especially those of you who have traveled from capitals to attend this important event. I would like to thank both our Chairperson-in-Office and the incoming Chairperson for their incisive remarks on the role of the OSCE in addressing current security challenges facing our region. The theme of this review conference – “Fostering Security and Stability” – has special resonance this year.

The purpose of the Annual Security Review Conference, as set out in the Porto Ministerial Council decision that established it, is “to provide a framework for enhancing security dialogue and for reviewing security work undertaken by the OSCE and its participating States.” This annual stocktaking is a useful exercise, but this year in particular, the goal of enhancing dialogue on security is especially important. The crisis in and around Ukraine has revealed a deep rift within our region that is also apparent in our Organization. Yet the OSCE is the only regional organization that includes Ukraine and all its neighbours, plus other key players. Although the Organization’s unity of purpose is being tested, its role as an inclusive platform for dialogue and joint action is now more critical than ever.

Ukraine and the Conflict Cycle

The OSCE's entire toolbox has come into play in Ukraine, further demonstrating the Organization's relevance. Starting already back in February, both the High Commissioner and the Representative on Freedom of the Media made several visits to Ukraine to assess the situation of national minorities and media freedom, including in Crimea. The High Commissioner and the Office of Democratic Institutions and Human Rights deployed a joint human rights assessment mission. ODIHR also fielded its largest election observation mission ever, with over 1,000 observers, for the May 25 presidential elections. The OSCE Parliamentary Assembly contributed with a high-level election observation mission. The Vienna Document has also been used extensively in the context of the Ukrainian crisis.

Back in March, we demonstrated foresight by initiating a National Dialogue Project, which looked for ways to de-emphasize the divisions within Ukraine and address common concerns through dialogue. This project clearly indicated that dialogue was urgently needed at many levels, and it helped to lay the groundwork for both the Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine and the national roundtables co-moderated by former Ukrainian Presidents Kuchma and Kravchuk in the run-up to the May 25 election. The roundtables were initially supported by Ambassador Wolfgang Ischinger on behalf of the Swiss Chairmanship, as well as by the Special Monitoring Mission, the Conflict Prevention Center's mediation support capability, and the Project Co-ordinator in Ukraine. It is essential now for this dialogue process to continue. The Office of the Project Co-ordinator also has projects in the pipeline to help Ukraine's new government build capacities and promote reform in several key areas.

On March 21, the Permanent Council authorized a Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine to gather information and to provide unbiased reporting on security conditions. Within hours of the PC decision, an advance team was on the ground in Ukraine. Within four days, the first four monitoring teams were working in the field. In just over a week, monitoring teams were present in all ten locations specified in the PC decision, and the initial 100 monitors were deployed within a month.

It is worth noting that this speedy roll-out was possible thanks to efforts by the Secretariat to operationalize Ministerial Council Decision No. 3/11 on "Elements of the Conflict Cycle." Several steps were particularly important, including a staff instruction on "Rapid Deployment of OSCE Human Resources for Early Action" that set out procedures for swift, temporary

deployment of “first responders”; the establishment of a “virtual pool” of equipment that could be quickly mobilized; and an “Operational Framework for Crisis Response” that enabled the rapid development of an implementation plan and budget for the Special Monitoring Mission. These are all tools that will serve the Organization well also in the future.

I should also mention that throughout the Ukraine crisis, we have maintained close contacts and co-ordinated our efforts with other stakeholders, including the United Nations. The OSCE’s multi-level and multi-track efforts to restore peace and stability in Ukraine have amply demonstrated that regional organizations can and do play a leading role in crisis management and resolution in their regions as envisaged in Chapter VIII of the United Nations Charter. This was one of the key conclusions of our recent OSCE Security Days conference devoted to exploring ways to revitalize co-operation between the United Nations and regional organizations under Chapter VIII.

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Although Ukraine has been the OSCE’s central focus in recent months, we must not forget our other priorities. We continue to face “traditional” politico-military security challenges within our region. At the same time, we must also contend with a range of increasingly complex and intertwined transnational threats and challenges. And instability on our periphery affects security in the OSCE region.

Allow me now to turn to these challenges.

Arms Control and Confidence- and Security-building Measures

On arms control and confidence- and security-building measures, Ambassador Popov, Chairperson of the Forum for Security Co-operation, will deliver his report shortly, so I will limit myself to some brief comments.

The persistent impasse over conventional arms control remains a cause for concern. It has a negative impact on security in our region, eroding trust and confidence in the military sphere and undermining military stability, transparency and predictability.

Strengthening arms control and CSBMs remains a long-term endeavor, and political commitments to efforts in this field should be upheld. As I have noted on a number of other occasions, the arms control debate needs to be revitalized and broadened. In this regard, the OSCE could play a significant role as an inclusive platform for dialogue that is unmatched by other organizations.

As for the debate itself, the focus may need to shift from a purely quantitative to a more qualitative approach, and greater flexibility and creativity will be essential. If a diversified regime is envisaged, then coherence must prevail; such a regime could encompass a mix of political and legal arrangements and/or include different elements tailor-made for different regions and sub-regions.

To help define the outlines of a formal arms control debate, I am ready to host an OSCE Security Days event devoted to the issue when the time is ripe. The OSCE Academic Network could also be called upon to provide some fresh thinking on this issue.

Transnational Threats

On transnational threats, contemporary challenges to security from terrorism, organized crime and trafficking in illicit drugs and human beings pose a growing threat to the OSCE region. In response, the Organization has significantly strengthened its capacity to combat these transnational threats.

Last year the participating States adopted an initial set of confidence-building measures to reduce the risks of conflict stemming from the use of information and communication technologies. In this, the OSCE was a pioneer – the first international organization to develop and agree on a set of cyber-CBMs. We are now implementing these CBMs, and we have begun to work on developing another set.

Because information sharing among law enforcement authorities is critical to combatting transnational threats, we are establishing a network of law enforcement institutions

throughout the OSCE area. This will enable them to pool their expertise and findings about transnational crimes, as well as to share relevant training curricula via the Internet.

Meanwhile, we continue to provide tailored assistance to participating States across the OSCE region, as well as to Partners for Co-operation, to help them address the growing challenges that terrorists, drug traffickers and other criminals pose to the security of their societies. We are also engaged with interested participating States and Partners in working toward the establishment of an OSCE Center for Excellence in Policing and a facility for capacity building on rule of law and anti-terrorism in the Mediterranean. The OSCE could and should be used as a platform for dialogue among heads of police, border management services, anti-narcotic, counter-terrorism and other law enforcement authorities.

But there is more that we can do. For example, we are working to strengthen public-private partnerships to combat transnational threats while ensuring that the rule of law is upheld and human rights and fundamental freedoms are respected. We are discussing plans to convene a meeting of participating States, Partners for Co-operation and influential representatives of the private sector to identify basic principles for public-private partnerships in tackling transnational threats in the OSCE region.

Afghanistan

As challenges in the OSCE's larger neighbourhood grow, we are developing a more strategic approach to adjacent regions and strengthening relationships with our Partners for Co-operation in Asia and the Mediterranean. Afghanistan is entering a new stage of its transformation – it will soon have a new president and the withdrawal of ISAF forces is imminent. I regard the fact that the OSCE, through ODIHR, provided support to the election process as a very positive contribution. But security remains precarious in Afghanistan – which has a direct impact on security in Central Asia, and indirectly on the larger OSCE region.

Strengthening security in and around Afghanistan calls for regional co-operation. The OSCE offers the international community a solid platform for dialogue and practical co-operation among all stakeholders. We continue to provide targeted support in critical areas to promote regional security, stability and economic development. Our field presences in Central Asia, the OSCE Academy in Bishkek, and the Border Management Staff College in Dushanbe are

strengthening local capacities and creating networks among experts in Afghanistan and the Central Asian states. With a stable source of funding, the Border Management Staff College could make full use of its potential and develop into a fully-fledged institution devoted to tackling transnational threats in the region. We have also considered establishing a research center in the region focused on Afghanistan to help us develop a deeper understanding of the challenges of its transformation and their impact on its Central Asian neighbours, which would inform our efforts to strengthen regional security and stability.

As Afghanistan embarks on the next phase of its transformation, the OSCE should continue to offer opportunities for co-operation and inclusive dialogue in the region. Strengthening security and stability in Afghanistan is in the interest of all participating States.

I am currently in discussions with the Wilson Center, an eminent U.S. think tank, on co-sponsoring an OSCE Security Days event in Washington, D.C., as a follow-up to the event we held last year in Vienna. A strong focus could be on effective border management and how it could enhance security, stability and economic development in Afghanistan and throughout Central Asia. This would be the first OSCE Security Days event to be held outside of Vienna.

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Before concluding, I would also like to say a word about the Helsinki +40 process. I fully support the efforts of the Swiss Chairmanship and the plans of the upcoming Serbian Chairmanship to advance the process despite the unexpected challenges that have arisen. There are plenty of issues where constructive work can be done at the strategic and operational levels, including with regard to the Conflict Cycle and improving the effectiveness and efficiency of the Organization. At the same time, we must not abandon our efforts to work toward the Astana vision of a free, democratic and indivisible security community anchored in agreed principles, shared commitments and common goals. And it is exactly because of the obstacles that have arisen, slowing our progress toward that vision, that our efforts remain more important than ever.

We have a full agenda this week. The OSCE's role as an inclusive and impartial platform for dialogue and joint action is one of the Organization's core strengths, one that sets us apart from other regional security organizations. The ASRC provides an excellent opportunity to utilize this capacity to the fullest. So I look forward to productive discussions, both in this room and in the margins of the meeting.

Thank you.