



*PERMANENT MISSION OF GREECE
TO THE OSCE*

*SECOND OPEN SKIES REVIEW CONFERENCE
OPENING SESSION*

STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF GREECE

Mr. Chairman,

First of all I would like to congratulate you for assuming the Chairmanship of the Second Review Conference and to express my delegation's gratitude for your efforts, over the past months, aiming at the diligent preparation of this very important event.

The Second Review Conference coincides with a renewed interest of the OSCE participating States to strengthen and update the conventional arms control arrangements in the OSCE area. During the 8 years of its operation, the Open Skies Treaty has proven to be a most valuable and well functioning instrument, providing openness and transparency in our region. This legally binding agreement is both a conventional arms control instrument and a confidence building tool. Along with the CFE Treaty and the Vienna Document, the Open Skies Treaty forms an interlocking and mutual reinforcing framework of arms control and CSBMs.

Greece remains committed not only to the goals of the Treaty, i.e. transparency and openness, but also to its underpinning principles of equity, reciprocity and cooperation. We believe that a well functioning arms control regime should be principle-based. In the framework of the OSCE, we have committed ourselves to a set of principles for inter-state and intra-state behavior. By adopting this set of principles, the pS voluntarily accepted a code of acceptable behavior. Non threat or use of force, respect for the territorial integrity, sovereignty and political independence of all pS remain, along with all other principles of the Helsinki Decalogue, the foundation stone for our arms control arrangements, present and future.

Mr. Chairman,

Though the implementation of the Open Skies Treaty has so far been successful, challenges lie ahead:

First: The economic crisis, currently affecting many States-parties, imposes financial restraints on the updating and the modernization of equipment which is required for the successful implementation of the Treaty in the future. Transition from the film-based cameras to digital cameras is one case in point. It is our belief that most States-parties will face serious difficulties to cover alone the cost involved. Therefore, groups of States-parties should deal with this requirement in a concerted and coordinated manner.

Greece participates in the POD-Group and provides aircraft suitable for observation flights. We possess for this purpose 4 C-130H aircraft which are in good operational condition. Since the first Review Conference, we participated in 8 observation flights and we received 12 passive overflights.

Second: We all recognize that, today, we are faced with new security threats and challenges, unforeseen during the Treaty's drafting. Greece is in favor of finding ways so as to use the Treaty's assets and capabilities, in a creative way, when dealing with these new challenges. The same could be said for using the Treaty's assets and capabilities in specific additional fields such as the environment. In all instances, the State Party concerned should provide, in advance, its consent for an extraordinary overflight of its territory. Furthermore, the use of the Treaty's assets for additional purposes should not undercut the States-parties' ability to fulfill the main target of the Treaty, i.e. verification and confidence building.

Mr. Chairman,

As the OSCE pS strive towards a modern arms control framework, recognizing that all instruments -irrespective of their specific configuration- are of interest to all "56", we believe that the Second Review Conference provides an opportunity to remind all pS of the importance of enlargement of the Treaty. The CSCE Ministers, already back in March 1992, stated that new accessions would enhance the effectiveness of the Treaty. We note, with satisfaction that, since the First Review Conference, the number of the States-parties has increased to 34. However, we note that, over the past years, no new applications have been submitted for accession to the Treaty. We are looking forward to a renewed interest by OSCE pS to the Treaty. At the same time, we would like to express our full support to the application of Cyprus, which has been pending on the Agenda of the Open Skies Consultative Commission for the past 8 years. We regret that, so far, no consensus has been reached on the application of Cyprus. We hope that the objecting State-party will reconsider its position for the sake of the Treaty and its objectives, and in implementation of the principles underpinning it.

We are looking forward to a fruitful Second Review Conference and we wish you, Mr. Chairman, every success in leading us in our deliberations.