



Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

Ambassador Louis-Alkiviadis Abatis
Deputy Head
Greek OSCE Chairmanship Task Force

Strengthening Energy Security in the OSCE area
Bratislava
6 and 7 July 2009

Mr Minister,
Mr Secretary General,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure to address this Conference on “Strengthening Energy Security in the OSCE area.” Please allow me, Mr Minister, to express my sincere thanks on behalf of the Greek OSCE Chairmanship to the Slovak Government for hosting this event in Bratislava and for its warm hospitality.

The Slovak Republic lies at the heart of Europe and, like several other OSCE Participating States, is an important hub and transit country for the energy flows between East and West. This meeting underlines the will of this country and its Government to take the lead in this vital area.

Energy security is one of the key components of the *OSCE Strategy Document for the Economic and Environmental Dimension*, adopted by the Maastricht Ministerial Meeting in December 2003. This is the starting point for the Organization. It is also the starting point for the Greek Chairmanship, as was made clear by Minister Dora Bakoyannis in her inaugural speech as OSCE Chairperson in Office on Greek priorities to the OSCE Permanent Council in January of this year.

Energy Security is an integral part of the OSCE’s comprehensive approach to security. This is why there is an increasing awareness on the part of the OSCE participating States

on the role of the Organization in this area. This was reflected in the Ministerial Decision adopted in Brussels in December 2006 on enhancing the energy security dialogue. Our meeting today should be considered as part of implementing this Decision.

In the current context, the international community and governments are confronted with many challenges connected to energy. Energy security raises many complex questions and brings in numerous factors that have to be taken into account when shaping strategies.

These factors include, for instance, the issue of the imbalance that exists at the global level between the projected demands for the supply of energy. This increasing demand will rely mainly on fossil fuels for the next 20 years and will originate mainly from non-OECD countries, particularly China.

An additional factor that we should take into account concerns the related and urgent need to reduce fossil energy consumption in order to fight the consequences of the CO₂ emissions on the global warming and its climate change effects. It is no longer disputable that climate change has consequences on security through multiple aspects: regional migration, rural desertification and/or natural disasters, such as flooding. These consequences, of course, have a direct link to security.

On behalf of the Chairmanship, I wish to say that Greece has invested much effort into developing partnerships within existing networks and by building new networks with the view to meeting the pressing demand of our times for the diversification of energy supplies.

Energy security is a real issue for our political leaders, our economies and our citizens. Energy pricing is a matter of concern from the consumers' side. It is also an indicator for potential tensions or scarcity. The present economic crisis has already affected the core economy of many countries and may jeopardize the capacity of energy importer countries. The dependence on a selected number of energy producers remains a concern for many States -- without robust alternative energy solutions.

Of course, energy issues also provide strong and wide ground for fruitful co-operation. This Conference seeks to provide another opportunity for such interaction and co-operation.

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Please allow me to repeat the obvious: co-operation is an absolute need when it comes to energy. The key word in this respect is inter-dependence. Inter-dependence between consumers, producers and transit countries. Interdependence, because of the significant investments required in the energy chain and that have to be secured by the reliability on long-term contracts from the consumers' side. Interdependence, because the energy is an important part of trade between countries and has contributed to building and to strengthening economic and political relationships within the OSCE area. This inter-dependence is a call to responsibility to us all, a call to dialogue and to building platforms for new and necessary co-operation.

The challenges raised by questions of energy security are also a call to the OSCE participating States to make the most of the OSCE and its comprehensive concept of security. The OSCE has many tools to draw on -- a wide geographic area, spreading from Vancouver to Vladivostok, a long-standing tradition of mutual cooperation and the capacity to include all relevant actors for common action within a comprehensive concept of security. These are unique assets. Let us use them.

The agenda of this conference is ambitious, and this is only reasonable. Judging from the 40 some countries that have sent delegates, this represents more than 70 % of the OSCE participating States and an impressive turnout. The OSCE is not alone in this effort. It is vital that so many key international organizations dealing with the energy security are collaborating to this dialogue. On behalf of the Greek Chairmanship, I thank you for this support and your contributions.

The themes of our discussions are rich, and concern the security of supply, the security of delivery, the opportunity of alternative sources, and the development of new networks of transport. The questions include also energy savings, energy efficiency, and renewable

energy. I see this is the beginning of a process, the start of a comprehensive dialogue in the OSCE, as its mandate allows.

I wish to draw your attention in particular to the need to develop the relevant legal principles to strengthen the energy security. The role of a political organization such as OSCE is to be a political platform – this is very valuable and it can help to mobilise the political will and attention necessary to establish sustainable rules and principles. Such principles are important because they will secure the mutual long term interests, they will guide choices for investments, they will facilitate and secure foreign investments in the energy sector, and they will build balanced situations of interdependence. This, also, is the reason why we have gathered.

I wish you a successful and fruitful conference.

Thank you.