

Mrs. Catherine LALUMIERE (Secretary General, Council of Europe) (interpretation from French): Mr. Chairman, your Excellencies, this is the first time that the Council of Europe is taking part in a CSCE Summit Meeting. Since it began, the CSCE process has developed without any links with the Council of Europe. The reason for this was the divide between East and West. The Council of Europe, which ever since 1949 has been responsible for conducting co-operation in common activities between the European countries sharing the same democratic views, was not of any interest to the East-European countries.

Now, the situation is different, after the spectacular rapprochement of recent months. A new epoch is opening for the CSCE. As far as the human dimension is concerned, the problem of institutionalizing the Helsinki process arises in very specific terms. Indeed, now that the same principles are accepted by all, they should be implemented in a practical, concrete and efficient manner. As President Bush said, the CSCE has to be brought back down to earth. For this purpose, is it necessary to set up entirely new institutions? It would be, if no existing institution was able to provide a satisfactory solution. On the other hand, the reply is, of course, entirely negative when new institutions are in a position to be fully used. There is no point in duplication, which can be both wasteful and confusing.

It is in this context and for those reasons that thought is now being given to the role that the Council of Europe might play in the area of the human dimension. On this subject, I noted that since yesterday morning a good many speakers have referred to the Council of Europe. The Council must be one of the artisans in the process of building the new Europe, or to use an expression much favoured by President Gorbachev, the building of the common European home. Indeed, the Council of Europe, set up to bring together and promote co-operation between the countries of Europe that shared the same democratic conceptions, is now becoming an organization for pan-European co-operation.

Since Finland joined, all the democratic countries of Western Europe, numbering 23, have been members of the Council of Europe. Since perestroika and the events of 1989, the Council has gradually been opening its doors to the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. This is taking place in step with the democratization of those countries.

Thus, Hungary became a full member of the Council on 6 November, Poland and Czechoslovakia should be in a position to join sometime during 1991. With Yugoslavia, Bulgaria and Romania, increasingly close co-operation is developing. This is also true of the USSR, which already possesses special guest status with the Council of Europe's Parliamentary Assembly, has acceded to several of the Council's conventions and is engaged in negotiations for the signing of others.

Thus, the geographical area of the Council of Europe is widening step by step. Let me make clear, however, that this extension is not just a question of form, with a purely geographical consequence. The gradual entry of countries of Central and Eastern Europe into the Council of Europe machinery has a political significance in that the countries concerned are thereby acceding to the Council of Europe's fundamental principles and accepting their checks and constraints. This is of primary importance for future stability and peace in Europe. Europe would be incomplete if it were designed solely as a collection of countries united only by their vicinity and by common material interests. Europe will be more stable and its peace more secure if it is built on the principles, rules and disciplines of which the founders of the Council of Europe had a full understanding, with regard to both pluralist democracy and respect for the rule of law and of human rights.

That being said, the Council of Europe's contribution to the implementation of the CSCE's principles should involve both dimensions of its action - the intergovernmental and the parliamentary dimensions.

In the intergovernmental co-operation framework, the most remarkable contribution of the Council of Europe concerns the field of human rights. The European Convention on Human Rights with its control

mechanisms, the European Commission, and Court of Human Rights, the European Social Charter and the European Convention on the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, are certainly the most widely-known instruments.

The standards defined in a case law built up over some 35 years represent a valuable gain. If an attempt were made to rewrite this chapter of European constitutional law, there would be a danger of the gain being undermined. Furthermore, an increasing number of the States of Central and Eastern Europe have committed themselves to adopting and implementing those standards, and that, certainly, is an opportunity for Europe. Thus, the Council of Europe's achievements seem to represent the safest reference point for realizing the Helsinki human rights objectives, including the whole issue of the rights of minorities.

Apart from human rights, other sectors of intergovernmental co-operation may be of interest to the CSCE. There is the European Cultural Convention, which could become one of the essential elements for promoting co-operation in the field of culture, education and sport. In youth matters, such co-operation could also rely on the support of original and very well tried structures of the European Youth Centre. Our network of legal co-operation could be further extended, since it enabled 140 European conventions to be drawn up, and its activity continues. These conventions, a great majority of which are open to non-member States, represent an important contribution to the creation of a single European legal area.

Our structures for co-operation also include the fields of health, the protection of the environment, the architectural heritage, the free flow of information, the struggle against drugs and so on. All this should be made available to the countries of Central and Eastern Europe who so wish, as well as to the United States and Canada, whenever possible.

Concerning the parliamentary dimension, our thinking is based on the point made here by numerous delegations, namely that the CSCE now needs a

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parliamentary dimension. Evidently, this parliamentary dimension cannot take the form of frequent meetings; our parliamentarians simply would not have the time. Furthermore, it would prove extremely cumbersome to create an entirely new parliamentary machinery, which is why it might be possible to make use of the structures and experience of the Assembly of the Council of Europe as a starting point to create, as a legally distinct entity, the parliamentary forum of the CSCE which is being called for.

This forum would, of course, bring together on an equal footing all the parliaments of the States participating in the CSCE process. I should like to point out, however, that the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe is already becoming, in fact, a pan-European parliamentary assembly, since it has welcomed delegations from parliaments of Central and Eastern European countries by granting them special-guest status.

So we must all reflect together about how best to establish this new parliamentary component in the simplest and most effective way.

These proposals for the future of Europe of course bring us to the question of the relations between the Council of Europe and the CSCE participating States which are not members of the Council of Europe. The Council of Europe is ready to take all necessary steps to open up its co-operation programmes to those States, if they wish, and when it is possible. Similarly, the Council of Europe is willing to use its human rights machinery to contribute to the development of similar procedures in that field beyond its member countries. The Council is also ready to take part in those CSCE meetings where its presence would be useful and to work with the bodies to be created within the CSCE structure.

The CSCE has accomplished a magnificent task and should pursue it. Today, the Council of Europe should lend its helping hand.

The meeting rose at 5.30 p.m.