



## Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

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**Speech to the Seoul Defense Dialogue**  
**12 November 2013**

**As delivered**

**The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) – Inspiration for Security Co-operation?**

Vice Minister Baek,  
Ministers,  
Excellencies,  
Distinguished participants,

It is a great pleasure to speak before this audience today, and I am grateful for your kind invitation. We in the OSCE have placed dialogue at the center of our efforts to promote security co-operation and to prevent conflicts. In this vein, I see this second Seoul Defense Dialogue, as providing an excellent opportunity to discuss the key security challenges facing the Asia-Pacific Region today. I hope it will continue as a forum to nurture dialogue on contemporary security issues for many years to come.

The interaction between the OSCE and the Republic of Korea, one of our longest-standing Asian Partner countries, is rich indeed. Next year will mark the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of this Partnership. Since 2001, Korea has hosted four meetings of the OSCE's Asian Partners. Last year I was invited to give a keynote address at the Jeju Forum and also at the Korea Foundation in Seoul. And only last month the OSCE participated in the Seoul Cyberspace Conference. I believe that this on-going sharing of experiences responds to the desire of our Korean partners to gain a better understanding of the OSCE's model of comprehensive, co-operative security. I hope to add to that understanding during my current visit to your country.

This past summer, I was honored to welcome Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs Cho to Vienna. He introduced us to President Park's "*Trust Politik*" and the initial concept of a *Northeast Asia Peace and Cooperation Initiative*. I encourage the Republic of Korea's efforts to build trust. In the case of the OSCE, trust building was one of the essential elements that enabled the participating States to develop and agree to the comprehensive approach to security that made the OSCE unique – one could even say revolutionary – at the time of its introduction. But I must emphasize that building trust should be seen as both a process and an end goal. It takes time and patience, and often there are setbacks along the way.

As an outsider, and not an expert on Northeast Asian security, I want to stress that any regional security arrangement is the product of the political context in which it operates. Obviously, the Northeast Asian context is unique, and your approach to building trust and co-operation will ultimately reflect the interests and values of all stakeholders.

My chief aim here today is to relate the OSCE's own experience of multi-lateral co-operation in the field of security. But let me be clear: I will not be making suggestions about how the *Northeast Asia Peace and Cooperation Initiative* should work. That is a matter for negotiation between you and your partners. Instead, I hope that you may find inspiration in the OSCE's experiences in building co-operative security.

In 2015, the OSCE will celebrate the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the signing of the Helsinki Final Act, a historic triumph of co-operation over conflict. In 1975, after a marathon process of negotiations that involved literally thousands of meetings and countless proposals, the parties to the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe – the CSCE – came together to agree on a basis for interstate relations. The result was the *Helsinki Decalogue*, ten principles that remain a foundation for the OSCE today. The signing of the Helsinki Final Act was all the more striking because the two main blocs of the Cold War era had distinct, even mutually opposing, political goals. Nonetheless, they were able to find common ground.

So, what made this co-operation possible? Certainly, the most important factor is context: one needs an environment that is ripe for such an agreement. Even more important was a willingness to engage, and to compromise – particularly on the part of the leadership in Washington and Moscow at the time. Another component was the role of countries perceived as neutral – such as Sweden, Switzerland, Austria and, of course, Finland – which were able to play a constructive and facilitating role between alliances with different interests and opposing worldviews.

The Helsinki Final Act achieved a balance between differing emphases in the definitions of key principles. On one hand, there was a desire to achieve recognition for the borders established in post-war Europe. On the other hand, there was a desire to ensure that human rights were included in the definition of security. The compromise was that self-determination and fundamental freedoms were to be advanced within existing borders and through the exercise of the sovereign responsibilities of existing States. Respect for human rights was, and continues to be, an integral part of this vision.

Indeed, a central legacy of Helsinki is the OSCE's comprehensive approach to security, which encompasses three dimensions: politico-military, economic & environmental, and the human dimension. This comprehensive view was revolutionary in 1975. The balance between these dimensions was the result of an intensive process of negotiations and was key to achieving agreements on the overall approach of the CSCE: in this balance, all parties found adequate space for their own priorities, thus providing an accepted platform for the engagement of all sides.

In 1994, almost 20 years after Helsinki, the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe became an organization, the OSCE. The change resulted from the need to reflect the new order and developments following the end of the Cold War, and in particular to respond to the conflicts of the early 1990s in the OSCE space. Out of this experience, the OSCE also developed its field operations, which assist participating States to meet their commitments. As a result, we have today 15 civilian operations, with more than 1500 staff working in the field.

At the 2010 Astana Summit, the OSCE participating States recognized that the security of our region is “inextricably linked” with that of neighbouring regions. We are therefore

strengthening relationships with our Partners for Co-operation in Asia and the Mediterranean, while developing a more strategic approach to our larger neighbourhood. Afghanistan is one of our Partners for Co-operation, and how to most effectively address its transition and the impact on the broader Eurasian region remains high on the OSCE security agenda.

In 2012, we witnessed a very welcome development when Mongolia – which had been an OSCE Partner for a Co-operation – became our 57th participating State. This addition to our ranks has enhanced the Eurasian component of the OSCE’s security community. Meanwhile Libya has applied to become a Partner for Co-operation. Clearly, the OSCE continues to offer an appealing model for co-operation.

Excellencies,  
Distinguished participants,

The OSCE, with 57 participating States, is the world’s largest and most inclusive regional organization under Chapter VIII of the United Nations Charter. Yet in many ways the OSCE remains a unique, complex, *sui generis* model for co-operative security. It is both a creature of its time and a product of constant evolution. The OSCE makes commitments that are politically, but not legally, binding on its participating States. This has allowed the OSCE to do remarkable work in building a broad definition of comprehensive security. It has also proved highly flexible and pragmatic, a key quality in the field of preventive diplomacy. On the other hand, it still lacks a legal personality, and a complex discussion is still ongoing on the issue of a possible charter for the OSCE.

Participating States set the Organization’s course, the rotating Chairmanship provides leadership, and the Secretary General ensures continuity and implementation of the decisions taken by the participating States. Our ambassadorial-level Permanent Council and Forum for Security Cooperation both meet weekly, providing continuous engagement among the participating States. Many working groups dealing with all aspects of the agenda of the organization meet every day at various levels. Together with our annual Ministerial Council meeting and Summits, this ensures that dialogue is constantly taking place.

The OSCE’s decisions are taken by consensus. Inclusivity is the OSCE’s greatest strength, but it has sometimes been perceived as a source of frustration or weakness. All actors, both small and large, have equal voices. The Organization represents States with different interests and priorities, which means that they do not always share a common agenda. However, through the exercise of political commitment, these differences can be bridged while recognizing the diversity of interests.

How is dialogue turned into concrete, results-oriented activities? The OSCE is a highly decentralized organization. Its field operations assist participating States to implement their commitments, and to engage at all stages of the conflict cycle, including early warning, conflict prevention, crisis management, post-conflict rehabilitation and, increasingly, reconciliation. The OSCE also developed Institutions that work autonomously in the field of human rights on the basis of their own mandates. The Organization has specialized units to deal with specific threats and challenges to the OSCE area, such as conflict prevention, transnational threats and human trafficking. In addition, the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly provides a parliamentary dimension to our work, which is valuable for raising the profile of the Organization in political discussions in capitals. Outside the Organization, but key to its success, are civil society actors, including NGOs and academic experts. I personally have

made a priority of increasing the Organization's Track II engagement, and outside experts from academia, think-tanks and NGOs have made enormous contributions to stimulating our debate and providing food for thought. In fact, the process, the mode of operation of the OSCE is not less interesting than its agenda.

As you can see, the OSCE's model of security co-operation is notable for its breadth and inclusiveness. But how has it added value in the security sector? The CSCE/OSCE made a substantial contribution to building peace in a deeply polarized world in which an atmosphere of hostility and mistrust prevailed. It was a catalyst for profound changes in East-West relations, and was instrumental in fostering security co-operation in post-Cold War transition processes. As the Organization built on lessons learned from confrontation with real challenges, it developed tools to deal with them.

Yet everyone at the OSCE recognizes that security challenges are not static or unchanging. The OSCE I present to you today is the result of an evolutionary process. And as security challenges evolve, adaptability becomes an essential quality for effectiveness. For example, OSCE participating States agree that individual countries cannot confront transnational threats like terrorism, drug trafficking, and cyber-security alone. We are all in it together. Strengthening the security of one benefits the whole community.

In this area of so-called "soft security" the OSCE is adapting its work to confront transnational threats more effectively, which in itself strengthens trust and confidence among participating States. These growing threats include new cyber-security/ICT challenges such as those discussed at the recent Seoul Cyberspace Conference and which form part of the agenda of this Seoul Security Dialogue. But I would like to stress that the OSCE's comprehensive approach requires that we confront transnational threats in ways that maintain democracy, the rule of law and respect for human rights.

The value of being adaptable also applies to the OSCE's relations with other international and regional organizations. I am taking steps, with the support of UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, to organize an informal meeting in Vienna early next year to discuss how Chapter VIII of the United Nations Charter, which concerns regional arrangements, can be more effectively operationalized. In other words, we will look at how regional organizations like the OSCE can better support the United Nations in dealing with regional conflicts. This informal meeting will provide a basis for open discussion among regional organizations, the United Nations, OSCE participating States, academics and other experts on best practices in four key areas: conflict prevention; conflict resolution; transnational threats; and challenges related to climate change, natural resource management and natural disasters. As a partner for Co-operation, Korea will be invited to this event, and I look forward to its participation.

I believe that a multilateral forum or initiative should always strive to benefit from existing mechanisms for international dialogue and co-operation. We can and should learn from each other's experiences. The work we do in the OSCE on security issues should, as much as possible, find a positive and complementary echo in other security forums in the OSCE region, whether NATO, the European Union, the Collective Security Treaty Organization, the Shanghai Co-operation Organization or the Council of Europe. Each organization has its proper place and role in the OSCE area. As we strive for effective and efficient collaboration with other international organizations, this often entails collaborating across a wide diversity of views and approaches to security.

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I applaud the Republic of Korea for its concept of a *Northeast Asia Peace and Cooperation Initiative*, and I wish you every success. I hope that my description of the OSCE, its origins and its continuous evolution will prove interesting, and perhaps even inspiring, for you. The key ingredients that have made the OSCE successful are political engagement, constant dialogue, and adaptability. Yet for any political organization, as the OSCE surely is, there are also the discrete, unique and unpredictable elements of timing, context and opportunity.

I would like to conclude by encouraging you to continue your efforts to build trust and confidence through dialogue. I have offered the OSCE's expertise to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in relevant fields of interest. We fully appreciate that our model, which is so much a product of the Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian security conditions of the last forty years, is only that, a single model. We fully recognize and appreciate that your eventual success will come from recognizing those elements that are suited to your political and security context, adapting them to your specific needs – and developing individualized tools of your own.

I look forward to the discussion on this topic.

Thank you.