

2013 ANNUAL SECURITY REVIEW CONFERENCE
OPENING STATEMENT BY H.E. MR. ANDRII OLEFIROV,
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Distinguished participants,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my great pleasure to address this distinguished audience on the occasion of the 2013 Annual Security Review Conference (ASRC). I sincerely welcome all the colleagues who have come to Vienna from capitals of participating States, Partners for Cooperation as well as from other international and regional organizations.

I also wish to congratulate Secretary General Lamberto Zannier on successful conclusion of the 2013 OSCE Security Days event yesterday. By actively engaging practitioners, academic experts, representatives of civil society and delegations, the Security Days strengthen the OSCE's interaction with relevant Track II initiatives and complement traditional security fora such as the ASRC.

Since its creation, the ASRC has established itself as an important forum for discussing security concerns that have been high on the agenda of the OSCE participating States, for reviewing the implementation of the OSCE commitments in the politico-military dimension and for furthering the work of the Organization in these areas. Indeed, the ASRC is a key event in the OSCE's annual calendar, which provides a platform for reviewing the work undertaken by the Organization and for enhancing our security dialogue.

The overall theme of this year's Conference, "Towards Helsinki+40, finding common responses to security threats and challenges", is highly relevant. It reflects the importance to the OSCE of the Helsinki+40 process as an inclusive effort to provide a strong and continuous political impetus to advancing work towards a security community and further strengthening our co-operation on the way towards 2015. The theme also points to the relevance of the ASRC as a contribution to Helsinki+40 within the politico-military dimension and is indicative of the continuous efforts required by all participating States to develop collective responses.

Over the next two days, we will discuss different aspects of the OSCE's security agenda, focusing on the topics that have been high on the Organization's agenda and which remain important today – transnational threats, the conflict cycle, conventional arms control, confidence and security building measures and Afghanistan.

Let me share briefly the Ukrainian OSCE Chairmanship perspective on these issues.

On transnational threats, the Ministerial Council and other decisions on OSCE efforts to address TNTs, adopted last year, provide a coherent framework for further operationalizing our activities. Thus, the focus this year has been placed on the practical implementation of those decisions. There have been good discussions in the Security Committee, a number of TNT-related events have already been held while others are planned for the remaining part of the year.

However, substantial tasks are ahead of us, as transnational threats evolve dynamically. We should continue concerted actions in order to ensure that the OSCE remains relevant and effective in addressing these threats. Joint analysis of these threats, the review of the Organization's toolbox and thus identification of further activities will be important parts of this endeavour.

Development of information and communication technologies has already lent an ever growing importance to our efforts on combating TNTs. We will continue providing necessary support to the activities of the OSCE Open-ended Informal Working Group. We hope that its constructive work will yield concrete deliverables this year.

The protracted conflicts in the OSCE area remain a serious threat to the regional stability and thus a major concern to all participating States. The efforts aimed at the conflict resolution must be stepped up, including those to promote dialogue between the parties, build confidence and reconcile the divided societies. Political will of the parties and their commitment to a peaceful resolution remains a key factor in the conflict settlement.

Unfortunately, in the past months we have witnessed troubling developments which have a potential to deepen the existing divisions. Preventing escalation and building trust requires continuous and concerted engagement of the OSCE.

A larger problem is behind all this, namely the absence of a sustainable and viable negotiated political settlement of the protracted conflicts. In the context of reaching our common goal – building a security community – we must redouble our efforts in order to achieve progress in the conflict resolution. The Chairmanship will remain committed to this goal, promoting dialogue and fostering the political will of the parties to the conflicts.

Speaking about conflict more generally, I am pleased to note the progress made in the implementation of the Vilnius Ministerial decision on elements of the conflict cycle. While its implementation seems to be on a solid path, I would like to highlight two areas crucial to success.

First and foremost, preventing conflict from emerging or re-emerging is essential. This is heavily reliant on early warning and early action in its different forms.

Second, achieving lasting peace and stability is dependent upon, among others, effective dialogue facilitation and mediation, comprehensive post-conflict rehabilitation and overcoming the cycle of mutual misperceptions and divisive memories.

Conventional arms control as well as confidence and security building measures constitute an integral part of the OSCE's comprehensive and co-operative concept of security. As they remain major tools for ensuring military stability, predictability and transparency, it is often emphasized within the OSCE that they should be revitalized, updated and modernized. However, real progress has been limited.

The Ukrainian Chairmanship believes that it is essential to move forward with updating of the Vienna document. Proceeding from the understanding that conventional arms control and CSBMs are interrelated and mutually reinforcing instruments, the Ukrainian Chairmanship has put forward a food-for-thought paper to facilitate discussion on their role in contemporary and future European security architecture. We are looking forward for the continuation of the relevant dialogue.

As a strong advocate of the global regime of non-proliferation, Ukraine attaches significant importance to further enhancing the OSCE's profile in countering the threat of proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. We hope that the work on updating the 1994 OSCE Principles Governing Non-Proliferation will be successfully finalized soon.

Developments in Afghanistan, especially as we approach the withdrawal of the International Security Assistance Forces in 2014, will continue to have security implications for neighboring states as well as for the entire OSCE area. We need to be well prepared to respond to the threats and challenges that can arise from the evolving security priorities and needs in Afghanistan and the wider region. Furthermore, supporting and assisting this OSCE Partner for Co-operation to the extent needed is in our common interest.

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me share with you some concluding remarks before I will enjoy the privilege to listen to your high quality debate.

I have happened to hear sometimes that the OSCE is sailing now in troubled waters. Indeed we are unlikely to count on the calm in the open ocean of international politics.

However, it is in our hands to avoid the storms. We need a greater unity of purpose for translating into reality the Astana vision of a security community, free of dividing lines, conflicts, spheres of influence and zones with different levels of security

Helsinki +40 process seems to provide us with ample opportunities to speed up our pace towards this goal despite the differences we are still facing.

The significant potential of the OSCE as a guarantor of security in the entire Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian region should be further utilized. This is a difficult but rewarding endeavor to which our forthcoming discussions at the Annual Security and Review Conference will undoubtedly contribute.

Thank you for your attention.