

Address by President Halonen at an occasion marking the 30th anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act

Address by President of the Republic Tarja Halonen at an occasion marking the 30th anniversary of the signing of the Final Act of the Conference on European Security and Cooperation (CSCE)

**Finlandia Hall, Helsinki
1 August 2005**

Check against delivery

On the 1st of August 1975, in this very building, President Urho Kekkonen noted that it was "a day of joy and hope" and the dawn of a new era in international relations.

The World leaders who signed the Final Act of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe knew they were making history. Few people could see or predict, however, that events would lead to the end of the Cold War and to the end of the political division of Europe and of the whole world.

Detente brought political and strategic stability to the Cold War order, in which the threat of large-scale war was always present. The CSCE sowed the seeds of change, which encouraged individuals to act on behalf of human rights and made civil societies the building blocks of new democracies.

The Helsinki Final Act was the real Magna Carta of detente - not only a charter for relations between states but also a charter of freedom for nations and individuals.

Today the world is in the midst of changes that have continued since the end of the Cold War. We have not been able to give our era a new name, nor can we know how the future generations will see us. There are both positive and negative trends in international relations.

Many development efforts have produced encouraging results. The progress of democracy is a fact. Regional cooperation to resolve problems and conflicts is growing around the world, most recently now also in Africa. The international community recognises that the respect of human rights and development based on the rule of law are important components of this cooperation.

New forms of co-operation are vitally important as we face new challenges. Terrorism does not respect human values, international laws or national borders. We have once again seen the deadly consequences of this destructive force. We are still confident that, with the help of stable societies and broad counteraction, we can prevent terrorists from achieving their goals and we will build a safer world based on open co-operation.

Ethnic, national and religious conflicts are constantly in the spotlight in international politics. The human rights violations and war crimes that are associated with them require actions on the part of the international community. States that have suffered from conflicts need outside support to establish democracy, human rights, rule of law and good governance.

The world's ecological state has woken us to a common responsibility. Cross-border and global problems concern all nations. There can be no lasting peace, when millions of people suffer every day from poverty, human rights violations, armed conflicts and terrorism. We need multilateral tools to meet the challenges of a globalising world.

We can see encouraging signs of common political will. This is implied both by the increased significance of NGOs and by the joint efforts of governments. The results have included the Doha round for liberating international trade, making it fairer, and most recently the G8 countries' commitment to resolve the poorest countries' debt problem and to help Africa on the road of development and self-reliance. Resolving global problems and managing globalization are and will remain at the core of world politics: these are strategic issues in the deepest sense of the word.

We need effective multilateralism to manage change. Hardly ever before has there been as great need for multilateralism as today. People are more aware of existing problems and their hope for a better future is greater than before. At the same time, the problems that need to be resolved have become more complex. Our resources are however limited. Multilateral institutions and organizations must engage in fair and frank cooperation in which they complement and strengthen each other's work. The United Nations plays a key role in this.

The international community cannot afford to fail in strengthening the UN at the Major Event in autumn.

Implementing the joint commitments in the Millennium Declaration would create a solid foundation for resolving security problems. It is the everyday way to deal with the causes of conflicts. Freedom from fear and freedom from want go hand in hand in building human security.

Eliminating poverty, strengthening equality among people and groups and ensuring development that is sustainable in terms of the environment, the economy and people's welfare are our common goals. The members of the UN have recognized that development, security and human rights are connected to one another.

* * *

The OSCE area - "from Vancouver to Vladivostok" - is closely involved in the change in global security thinking and politics, from a strategic as well as a social perspective. We have the primary responsibility for our area – this responsibility is also important part of our global responsibility.

The members of the OSCE include countries that have successfully adopted democracy and good governance as well as countries where political, economic and social reform and building a civil society are well on their way. There are also member countries that are in the challenging process of rebuilding after difficult conflicts or those that are in the grip of frozen or open conflicts.

The OSCE area borders on conflict zones in the Far East, South Asia and the Middle East. The link to global development and regional conflicts underlines the necessity of broad security thinking and cooperation among organizations.

The OSCE's strategy for the 21st century recognizes and analyses global and cross-border problems and other new threats. In addition to terrorism, the spread of weapons of mass destruction, the spread of small weapons, organized crime and human trafficking, and economic and environmental factors that influence security are all issues on the OSCE's agenda.

In the middle of the present decade, we are still facing the tasks inherited from the 1990s as well as the need to prevent new threats and risks and to protect societies. We must be able to protect democratic societies but at the same time avoid infringing our basic values in societies.

We must aim for effective decision-making and institutional clarity in the midst of uncertainty and complexity. We must boldly evaluate the institutions' own tasks and their own role and relation to other actors. Cooperation between international organisations must be developed and at the same time ensuring that so called forum shopping does not occur.

The OSCE must be effective and co-operative. The OSCE has begun a dialogue concerning how the organization should be reformed and developed so that it can retain its significance, take advantage of its strengths and make a greater contribution in the important tasks that stand before it.

Guaranteeing human rights and particularly protecting national minorities and strengthening tolerance are a core area of the OSCE's activities, in which it has fruitful cooperation with the Council of Europe.

The enlargement of European Union and its neighbourhood policy as well as EU's key role in resolving regional conflicts, underline the Union's significance in strengthening the OSCE. Stability and democratic change in neighbouring areas, which the OSCE supports, are vital for all the EU member states. The EU should support the reform of the OSCE and improve cooperation with it.

The OSCE remains vital in maintaining the broad concept of security also in the future. I hope that this historical meeting will stimulate all participants to reflect issues from a historical perspective – meaning not only our own evaluation on the past but also reflecting how our era and work will be seen in the future. Finally, I would like to express my warm thanks to all of you for the 30 years of co-operation.
