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Meaningful Steps

**Report on progress made during
Lithuania's Chairmanship of the OSCE, 2011**

Vilnius, 7 December 2011

FOREWORD

In 2011, the main goal of Lithuania's Chairmanship of the OSCE was to help participating States work towards the realization of a free, democratic, common and indivisible Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian security community stretching from Vancouver to Vladivostok. This is a major task, which of course cannot be achieved in a single year. That is why Lithuania decided to concentrate on five main priorities:

- register tangible progress in addressing **protracted conflicts**;
- significantly improve our record of implementation of **media freedom** commitments;
- enhance the OSCE profile with regard to **transnational threats**, including those emanating from the territory of **Afghanistan**;
- define the OSCE's role in our **energy security** dialogue, and
- promote **tolerance education** throughout the OSCE area in order to combat hate crimes and discrimination.

We have made significant efforts in each of these areas, and I believe that in the course of the year we reached tangible objectives in most of them. I am proud of the work that the Chairmanship team, the OSCE executive structures and the 2011 Chairmanships of the OSCE Forum for Security Co-operation (FSC) have done in getting the Transdniestrian settlement process back on track, updating the 1999 Vienna Document on confidence- and security-building measures, creating the Vilnius Guidelines on the protection of journalists, enhancing the OSCE's capacity to combat transnational threats, the successful conclusion of the mandate of the OSCE Office in Zagreb, and strengthening co-operation with Partners for Co-operation.

Nonetheless, much work remains to be done. Like any Chairmanship, Lithuania also had to respond to unforeseen events, and to the changing priorities of the OSCE community. In 2011, these included:

- the aftermath of the December 2010 presidential elections in Belarus;
- a political crisis in Albania;
- outbreaks of violence in northern Kosovo; and
- the dramatic events of the "Arab Spring".

We also had to deal with disappointments in the work of the OSCE itself, like the closure of the OSCE Office in Minsk, the inability of participating States to agree on the OSCE's return to Georgia, lack of progress in resolving the crisis in Nagorno-Karabakh, and back-sliding on the implementation of human dimension commitments in some OSCE countries.

On the whole, however, I believe – as this report demonstrates – that under Lithuania's Chairmanship, the OSCE was able to take meaningful steps that can enable progress across all three dimensions. The common vision of a security community remains the right one. In the coming years, it is up to all participating States of the OSCE to make that vision a reality.



Audronius Ažubalis
OSCE Chairperson-in-Office

Introduction: “The time has now come to act”

In December 2010, Heads of State or Government agreed on the Astana Commemorative Declaration, which set forth a vision of a *free, democratic, common and indivisible Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian security community stretching from Vancouver to Vladivostok, rooted in agreed principles, shared commitments and common goals*. The challenge for the OSCE in 2011, under Lithuania’s Chairmanship, has been to take meaningful steps towards the realization of this vision.

The Lithuanian Chairmanship was tasked in Astana to organize a follow-up process within existing formats, taking into consideration ideas and proposals put forward by the participating States, including in the framework of the Corfu Process and in the preparation of the Astana Summit. Lithuania structured its efforts through a comprehensive Work Programme (CIO.GAL/4/11/Rev. 1) that took into consideration ideas and proposals that had been put forward by the participating States, particularly in the draft Astana Framework for Action. It was inspired by the sentiment expressed in the Astana Declaration that “*the time has now come to act, and we must define concrete and tangible goals in addressing these challenges.*” As a complement to official discussions within the OSCE structures, the Chairmanship has organized a series of informal ambassadorial-level “V-to-V (Vancouver to Vladivostok via Vilnius and Vienna) Dialogues.”

Recognizing that the realization of the security community would be a long-term process, the Lithuanian Chairmanship focused its efforts on five main priorities:

- register tangible progress in addressing **protracted conflicts**;
- significantly improve our record of implementation of **media freedom** commitments;
- enhance the OSCE profile with regard to **transnational threats**, including those emanating from the territory of **Afghanistan**;
- define the OSCE’s role in our **energy security** dialogue, and
- promote **tolerance education** throughout the OSCE area in order to combat hate crimes and discrimination.

Of course, like any Chairmanship, Lithuania also had to be responsive to unforeseen events, and to the changing priorities of the OSCE community. In 2011, the OSCE had to respond, *inter alia*, to:

- the aftermath of the December 2010 presidential elections in Belarus, and the subsequent closure of the OSCE Office in Minsk;
- a political crisis in Albania;
- outbreaks of violence in northern Kosovo; and
- the dramatic events of the “Arab Spring” and its impact of OSCE-Mediterranean dialogue and security of the OSCE area.

The OSCE and its participating States were also affected by an on-going global financial crisis, which had political and social, as well as economic consequences. The crisis has put the Organization under particular pressure to deliver the best value for the contributions provided by the participating States; it has diminished the ability of some participating States to support the Organization's activities by providing seconded personnel and extra-budgetary contributions; it has consumed the time and attention of political leaders across the OSCE area; and it has underscored the importance of effective co-ordination of the OSCE's activities with those of other international and regional organizations, in the interest of avoiding unnecessary duplication of effort.

This report reviews the concrete and tangible goals that were set out this year, and attempts to measure the progress that was made in reaching them. It should be seen as a complement to the *2011 Lithuanian OSCE Chairmanship Work Programme*. It is not meant to be an exhaustive chronicle of everything that took place in the OSCE framework in 2011. Rather, it is designed to highlight meaningful steps have been taken towards the security community, with a view to taking this work forward under future OSCE Chairmanships.

Addressing protracted conflicts

The persistence of **protracted conflicts** remains one of the greatest threats to security and co-operation within the OSCE area. Therefore, one of the highest priorities for Lithuania's Chairmanship of the OSCE has been to enhance the Organization's capabilities to address all phases of the conflict cycle, and to promote settlement of protracted conflicts.

During several workshops, seminars, V-to-V Dialogues, and discussions in the Security Committee and other negotiating fora, OSCE participating States exchanged many ideas on how the OSCE might strengthen its capacity in this core function. This resulted in a Ministerial Council (MC) decision on *Elements of the Conflict Cycle, Related to Enhancing the OSCE's Capabilities in Early Warning, Early Action, Dialogue Facilitation and Mediation Support, and Post-Conflict Rehabilitation*. This should enhance the Organization's ability to prevent and respond to conflicts and crises in the OSCE area – which is one of its core functions.

In Astana, OSCE Heads of State or Government agreed that *“increased efforts should be made to resolve existing conflicts in the OSCE area in a peaceful and negotiated manner, within agreed formats, fully respecting the norms and principles of international law enshrined in the United Nations Charter, as well as the Helsinki Final Act.”*

To that end, Lithuania pushed for the resumption of formal 5+2 talks in order to achieve progress in the **Transdniestrian settlement process**. On 8-10 February, the Chairperson-in-Office, Lithuanian Foreign Minister Audronius Azubalis, visited Moldova and met with officials and civil society activists from both banks of Nistru river. Together with his Special Representative for Protracted Conflicts, Ambassador Giedrius Čekuolis, he also remained in regular contact with the Russian Federation, Ukraine, the EU and US. Informal meetings in the 5+2 format were held in Vienna on 14-15 February and 4-5 April, and in Moscow on 21 June. Furthermore, three informal meetings were held under the auspices of the OSCE between Prime Minister Filat of Moldova and Transdniestrian leader Smirnov. On 9 September, in Bad Reichenhall, Germany, a set of regulations governing the operations of the Expert Working Groups on Confidence Building Measures was adopted. On 22 September in Moscow, participants in the Permanent Conference on Political Issues in the Framework of

the Negotiation Process for the Transdniestrian Settlement agreed to resume their formal negotiations in the 5+2 framework (for the first time in nearly six years). The first meeting took place in Vilnius on 30 November and 1 December. Unfortunately, despite the tangible progress achieved throughout 2011 in the negotiation process, a separate Ministerial Statement on the resumption of the official 5+2 negotiations on the Transdniestrian settlement could not be adopted. However, the Chairmanship encourages the parties, and the mediators, to seize the opportunity that has been created by the formal resumption of the settlement process.

Like the Transdniestria conflict, the **Nagorno-Karabakh** conflict has gone on for too long. Throughout the year, the Chairmanship, the Co-Chairs and members of the Minsk Group, and other participating States urged the parties to continue, in a greater spirit of compromise, to negotiate a peaceful settlement based upon the principles of the Helsinki Final Act, including non-use or threat of force, territorial integrity, and the equal rights and self-determination of peoples. This culminated in agreement on a Joint Statement by the Heads of Delegation of the Minsk Group Co-Chair Countries and the Foreign Ministers of Armenia and Azerbaijan on the margins of the Vilnius Ministerial Council on 6 December. In it, the five Heads of Delegations agreed on the need to continue the negotiating process in the format of the OSCE Minsk Group and to improve the climate for making progress towards a peaceful settlement. The Ministers of Armenia and Azerbaijan said that *their Presidents are ready to meet again jointly in the near future under the auspices of the Co-Chair countries to continue their direct dialogue, building upon recent experience, on how to bring peace, stability and prosperity to their peoples*. This year, many deplorable incidents occurred along the Line of Contact. These incidents resulted in the loss of life, and contributed to increased tension in the region. The Chairmanship, alongside the Co-Chairs of the Minsk Group, called on the parties to take additional, immediate actions to reinforce the cease-fire agreement by agreeing on a mechanism to conduct investigations of incidents along the Line of Contact, and by removing snipers.

Concerning the existing conflict in Georgia, the Geneva International Discussions, which are now in their third year, serve as a valuable contribution to security and stability in the region. Throughout the year, the Chairmanship promoted dialogue in this format, and called upon all participants to redouble their efforts to address International Security arrangement issues, in particular the necessity for commitment from all sides on non-use of force, as well as the humanitarian needs of affected communities via the follow-up process of the recommendations of the 2008 ODIHR/HCNM report. The Chairperson-in-Office also presented a proposal, updated this year, calling for the restoration of an OSCE presence based on a status neutral agreement. Thanks to an unprecedented number of regular meetings, substantial progress was made on the effective use of the Incident Prevention and Response Mechanisms (agreed within the Geneva Framework) in solving security issues on the ground. Whereas the implementation of the OSCE-led water projects reached the final stage and talks on the follow-up have already started. Throughout the year, the Chairmanship stressed that progress in the negotiation process can only be made if there is full engagement and political will from all conflict sides.

Responding to unforeseen events in the OSCE area

The year started with the news that the Belarusian authorities had not agreed to extend the mandate of the OSCE Office in Minsk. The OSCE nevertheless continued its work in Belarus, for example through the activities of the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media and ODIHR's monitoring of trials of people arrested following the 19 December

Presidential elections (report published on 10 November 2011). On 6 April, fourteen OSCE participating states invoked the 1991 Moscow Mechanism which led to a report and recommendations on the human rights situation in Belarus. Throughout the year, the Chairperson-in-Office has tried to maintain a dialogue with his Belarusian counterparts, presenting a package of possible OSCE activities, while often speaking out against violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

The Chairmanship was concerned about repeated flare-ups of violence in northern Kosovo, particularly in the latter part of the year. The Chairperson-in-Office frequently appealed for calm and co-operation, reinforcing the message during his visit to South Eastern Europe on 4-8 July. He also emphasized the urgency of regional co-operation in finding a humane solution for the refugees and Internally Displaced Persons who were driven from their homes during the upheavals in the Balkans during the 1990s.

On 27-29 January, Lithuanian Deputy Foreign Minister Evaldas Ignatavičius, on behalf of the Chairperson-in-Office, visited Albania in order to prevent escalation of the confrontation between pro-government and opposition forces in Tirana. The Chairmanship also accompanied the OSCE Secretary General when he visited Albania in March to further counsel calm in the pre-election period.

Throughout the year, the Chairmanship actively promoted implementation of the Community Security Initiative (CSI) in Kyrgyzstan which is designed to restore confidence between the communities and in the law enforcement agencies as well as dealing with security challenges in the country after the violent inter-ethnic conflicts in 2010. The Chairmanship continued to monitor the situation in the country together with representatives of the EU and UN.

Politico-Military Dimension

As stated in the Astana Commemorative Declaration, “*conventional arms control and confidence- and security-building regimes remain major instruments for ensuring military stability, predictability and transparency, and should be revitalized, updated and modernized.*” Heads of State or Government assigned particular priority to the updating of the Vienna Document 1999.

In 2011 the FSC Chairmanship was held by Iceland, Italy and Kazakhstan. The three chairmanships constantly worked in close co-operation with each other and with the OSCE Chairmanship-in-Office to ensure continuity, balance and efficiency in the implementation of the Forum’s annual work programme and implementation of the Astana Summit and Athens Ministerial taskings.

The focus of the FSC work in 2011 continued to be on the core politico-military issues, such as arms control and confidence- and security-building measures (CSBMs), small arms and light weapons (SALW), stockpiles of conventional ammunition (SCA), the Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security (CoC) and the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1540(2004). Subsequently, three decisions – on issues relevant to the FSC, on SALW and stockpiles of conventional ammunition, and on the proper role of the OSCE in facilitation of UNSCR 1540 – were adopted by the ministers in Vilnius. Separate progress reports on further implementation of the commitments on those issues were forwarded to the Ministerial Council by the FSC Chair.

As tasked by the Astana Summit, the 1999 Vienna Document (VD) on confidence- and security-building measures was updated and reissued in November as Vienna Document 2011. It incorporates nine so-called “VD Plus” decisions that have been adopted by the FSC over the past two years.

The 2011 OSCE High-Level Seminar on Military Doctrines examined changes in military doctrine deriving from evolving threats, changing forms of conflict and the emergence of new technologies.

Four joint FSC-PC meetings were held in 2011 to address cross-dimensional issues relevant to the work of both the PC and FSC.

Finally, comprehensive discussions took place under the Security Dialogue. Pertinent presentations were given by high-level guests and experts on subjects related to current security issues.

Economic and Environmental Dimension

OSCE Heads of State or Government agreed in Astana that “*mutually beneficial co-operation aimed at addressing the impact on our region’s security of economic and environmental challenges must be further developed.*” To that end, Lithuania’s Chairmanship tried to push forward the OSCE’s work in the second dimension in a number of areas, particularly energy security, transport, confidence-building measures, regional co-operation and equal opportunity for women in the economic sphere. The main topic of the 19th OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum, held in Prague on 14 September, was the development of sustainable energy and transport.

As noted in Astana, “*our energy security dialogue, including on agreed principles of our co-operation, must be enhanced.*” The issue of energy security therefore gained considerable attention in 2011, for example in discussions in the Economic and Environmental Committee, the Economic Forum, and during an OSCE conference on “*Integrating Global Energy Markets – Providing Energy Security*” that took place in Ashgabat, Turkmenistan on 3-4 November. At the Ministerial Council, consensus could not be reached on *Fostering Energy Dialogue in the OSCE Area*. Renewed efforts will be required in the coming year to address this important issue of concern in the OSCE area.

Transport security was also a Chairmanship priority. The need for a coordinated policy to ensure that transport grows sustainably, benefiting the environment as well as the economy, was highlighted at a meeting in Druskininkai, Lithuania, on 4-5 April. Participating States also adopted a Ministerial Council decision on *Strengthening Transport Dialogue in the OSCE*.

At the Vilnius Ministerial Council, a decision was taken on *Promoting Equal Opportunity for Women in the Economic Sphere*. It notes with concern the continued inequities faced by women in the OSCE region in terms of labour-market participation, as well as the continued

under-representation of women in economic leadership and decision-making processes in the public and private sectors. Since, as the decision recognizes, the equal participation of women in the economic sphere contributes significantly to economic recovery, sustainable growth and the creation of cohesive societies, participating States are called upon to promote equal opportunity for women in the economic sphere. The decision was built on the outcomes of the Conference on Women's Entrepreneurship held in Vilnius on 3-4 March.

On 30 May, the Chairmanship held a workshop on "*Economic and Environmental Activities as Confidence-Building Measures*." The event provided an opportunity for participating States to share information on best practices, successful experiences and accumulated know-how regarding the contribution of economic and environmental activities to the restoration of trust and the enhancement of confidence.

In 2011, progress was made on strengthening the effectiveness of the economic dimension of the OSCE, building on past initiatives including the 2009 Chairmanship's Report on the Future Orientation of the Economic and Environmental Dimension of the OSCE. For example, participating States held the first-ever Economic and Environmental Dimension Implementation Meeting (EEDIM). The meeting gave new impetus to the review of the implementation of OSCE commitments in the economic and environmental dimension. The Chairmanship strongly encouraged the participating States to organize similar meetings on an annual basis. Furthermore the annual cycle of work in the economic and environmental dimension was synchronized with the Chairmanship's year. A Permanent Council decision was taken on 7 December (in Vilnius) on *Strengthening the Effectiveness of the Economic and Environmental Dimension of the OSCE*, which envisages, inter alia, a review of the 2003 OSCE Strategy Document for the Economic and Environmental Dimension.

In 2011, participating States also discussed challenges posed by natural and man-made disasters and what role the OSCE can play as part of a co-ordinated response by the international community.

Human Dimension

Freedom of the media was a high priority for the Lithuanian Chairmanship. After all, as OSCE Heads of State or Government said in Astana, "*We value the important role played by civil society and free media in helping us to ensure full respect for human rights, fundamental freedoms, democracy, including free and fair elections, and the rule of law.*"

In visits to a number of OSCE states, Foreign Minister Ažubalis stressed the need for full implementation of OSCE commitments related to freedom of the media, and he championed the cause of journalists who had been harassed or arrested. A Conference on Safety of Journalists in the OSCE Region was held in Vilnius on 7-8 June. On the eve of the Vilnius Ministerial, the Chairperson-in-Office and the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media launched a manual of good practices that promote safety of journalists, building on the recommendations of the Vilnius conference. It offers concrete guidelines to protect journalists and to ensure that those who use force or violence against journalists are brought to justice. Unfortunately, no consensus was reached on an MC decision on enhancing safety of journalists, despite the fact that many journalists in the OSCE area continue to face violence, harassment and even death due simply to their exercising their professional responsibilities. This subject should remain high on the OSCE's agenda, and we are pleased that the incoming Irish Chairmanship has expressed its intention to continue work in this area.

Pluralism in digital media was also discussed intensely throughout the year. Rapid technological changes in the so-called new media are creating new challenges in relation to ensuring pluralistic media and pluralism within the media. This is particularly the case in relation to the Internet and the switchover from analogue to digital broadcasting. Efforts were made to ensure that existing OSCE commitments related to freedom of media would be applied in the context of new media. While no consensus was reached on a Ministerial Council decision on pluralism in digital media, it is clearly a highly relevant topic and one that deserves further attention by participating States.

In Astana, our Heads of State or Government agreed that “*greater efforts must be made to promote freedom of religion or belief and to combat intolerance and discrimination.*” In 2011, the Lithuanian Chairmanship assigned high priority to promoting tolerance and non-discrimination, particularly through education and awareness-raising. Personal Representatives of the Chairperson-in-Office on Combating Anti-Semitism, on Combating Intolerance and Discrimination against Muslims, and on Combating Racism, Xenophobia and Discrimination against Christians and Members of Other Religions carried out visits throughout the OSCE area. A high-level Conference on *Combating Anti-Semitism in Public Discourse* was held in Prague on 23-24 March, a round-table on *Combating Intolerance and Discrimination against Christians* took place on 12 September in Rome, and a high-level meeting on *Confronting Intolerance and Discrimination against Muslims in Public Discourse* was held in Vienna on 28 October. Regrettably, there was no consensus on an MC decision on countering manifestations of intolerance and discrimination in public discourse while respecting fundamental freedoms.

A set of key recommendations on National Human Rights Institutions (NHRI) was compiled based on the findings of the Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting held in April 2011 and a conference on NHRIs in the OSCE area was held in Vilnius in 13-14 July. Participating States, which have not already done so, should establish effective, independent and pluralistic national human rights institutions.

In 2011, in response to interests expressed by a number of participating States, there was a lively discussion on freedom of movement. While it was not possible to reach consensus on a Ministerial Council decision, the debate helped to clarify the position of participating States, and to encourage steps to promote this fundamental freedom.

Throughout the year, during visits to participating States and consultations in Vilnius, the Chairperson-in-Office met with civil society activists and human rights defenders. In order to promote dialogue among representatives of civil society from OSCE participating States and Partners for Co-operation, the Chairmanship organized an OSCE-Mediterranean Partner Countries’ Civil Society Conference in Vilnius on 4 and 5 December. Furthermore, on the eve of the Ministerial, a Parallel Conference took place in Vilnius at which representatives of civil society met to review the human rights situation in the OSCE area. Representatives of civil society presented recommendations to the Chairperson-in-Office as input to the Ministerial Council.

During the course of the year, the Chairmanship explored possibilities for modernizing human dimension events. Reform of human dimension events was included in the work programme of the Human Dimension Committee. The Chair of that committee commissioned an

independent think-tank to further study the issue in order to identify and recommend options on how to make the human dimension events more attractive, effective, and focused.

Addressing Transnational Threats

In Astana, OSCE Heads of State or Government agreed that “*in today’s complex and interconnected world, we must achieve greater unity of purpose and action in facing emerging transnational threats.*” In 2011, several steps were taken to strengthen the capacity of the OSCE and its participating States to translate these words into actions.

The Astana Commemorative Declaration identified cyber threats as a growing menace to security. This issue was explored in depth in the OSCE this year, most notably during the *OSCE Conference on a Comprehensive Approach to Cyber Security: Exploring the Future OSCE Role* in Vienna on 9-10 May. The Conference made a number of concrete recommendations for OSCE follow-up activities and reiterated that the OSCE offers a unique platform to discuss threats to cyber security due to its comprehensive approach to security and broad membership. Subsequent discussions brought about broad support to the Chairmanship’s suggestion to establish an informal OSCE Working Group to elaborate a set of future CBMs for the cyber space in 2012.

Addressing the border issues, the CiO organized a seminar on “*Applied Issues in International Land Boundary Delimitation/Demarcation Practices*” on 31 May – 1 June 2011 in Vilnius, where significant interactions between representatives of neighbouring countries took place. This was the first dialogue triggered by the OSCE on this crucial topic. The OSCE’s 2011 Annual Security Review Conference under the overall theme “*Toward a Security Community: What Has to Be Done*” provided an excellent opportunity for the OSCE to “compare notes” with other security organizations on their perception of existing challenges to our common security, as well as on future trends. As underscored by the Conference’s special guest NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen, the need for a comprehensive approach to security threats in Europe as well as in North Africa and the Middle East remains indispensable, he also made concrete suggestions on practical cooperation between the OSCE and NATO.

Drugs pose a threat to health and security in the OSCE area. To address this issue, the Chairmanship organized an event on “*Combating Drug Trafficking and Enhancing Border Security and Management in the OSCE Area*” on 16-17 June in Vienna.

In 2011 participating States have been actively engaged in five concrete areas of work with the aim of consolidating OSCE mandates relating to police activities, countering terrorism, fighting illicit trafficking of drugs, enhancing cyber security and strengthening coordination and coherence of the OSCE actions in the sphere of fighting transnational threats.

As a result, a complementary package of mutually reinforcing decisions on transnational threats was brought before the Ministerial Council. Unfortunately, it was not possible to reach consensus on some elements of that package at the Ministerial. Nevertheless, a decision was adopted on *Strengthening Coordination and Coherence in the OSCE’s Efforts to Address Transnational Threats*, which refers, *inter alia*, to the Secretary General’s proposal to create a new department in the Secretariat to address transnational threats. The Chairmanship believes that the Secretary General’s well-crafted proposal, which builds upon ideas debated by the participating States since 2009, constitutes a meaningful step toward strengthening OSCE

efforts in addressing transnational threats. At the same time, the Chairmanship is convinced that the remaining four draft decisions – first of all on Police Strategic Framework and on Cyber Security – can be adopted early next year.

Other Cross-dimensional Issues

2011 marked the 60th anniversary of the 1951 Convention Relating to Status of Refugees and the 50th Anniversary of the 1961 Convention on Reduction of Statelessness. Since there are still a high number of refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the OSCE area, a special thematic event on the issue was held in Vienna on 27 May. Furthermore a Central Asia Conference on Refugee Protection and International Migration was held in Almaty, Kazakhstan on 15-16 March. This year special attention was devoted to the issue of refugees, IDPs and statelessness in South Eastern Europe. On 26-27 October the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities, together with UNHCR, organized a conference in Zagreb on the Provision of Civil Documentation and Registration in South Eastern Europe. Furthermore, progress was noted in relation to the efforts of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro and Serbia to achieving just, comprehensive and durable solutions for refugees and IDPs as agreed, *inter alia*, in the Joint Ministerial Declaration in Belgrade on 7 November 2011. Other regions of the OSCE area are encouraged to learn from the experience of South Eastern Europe.

The OSCE has long played an active role in combating human trafficking. In order to recognize what has been achieved, and to further intensify the fight against this modern form of slavery, participating States adopted a Ministerial Declaration on *Combating All Forms of Human Trafficking*. It calls, *inter alia*, for greater protection of victims of human trafficking, the strengthening of child protection systems, and further prevention of labour exploitation.

Partners for Co-operation: the “Inextricable Link” with Neighbouring Regions

At the Astana Summit, OSCE heads of state or government declared that: “*We recognize that the security of the OSCE area is inextricably linked to that of adjacent areas, notably in the Mediterranean and in Asia. We must therefore enhance the level of our interaction with our Partners for Co-operation.*”

In 2011, the attention of the OSCE community was very much focused on developments in the southern Mediterranean. Uprisings in the region created both new opportunities and challenges to the people of the affected countries as well as for the OSCE.

In response to the recent and still on-going changes in the southern Mediterranean, participating States held a number of discussions and expressed the OSCE’s readiness and willingness to support democratic transition processes in the region, drawing upon the Organization’s experience in assisting democratic transitions in its own participating States. The OSCE shared information on areas in which the Organization might offer support with the governments of Egypt and Tunisia. Several Mediterranean Partner for Co-operation have expressed interest in relevant OSCE experience and expertise. To explore further possible areas of co-operation, the Chairperson-in-Office visited Tunisia on 15-17 April, ODIHR Director Janez Lenarčič visited Morocco on 24-27 May 2011, while Lithuanian Deputy Foreign Minister Asta Skaisgirytė-Liauškienė and a team of ODIHR experts visited Egypt from 31 May to 3 June. The Secretary General visited Cairo in September for meetings with Egyptian officials and the Secretary General of the League of Arab States. Members of the

OSCE Parliamentary Assembly monitored the elections to the Constituent Assembly in Tunisia in October. The Chairperson-in-Office supported the efforts of the United Nations Secretary General to promote international co-operation in response to the uprisings in the Arab world. The OSCE-Mediterranean dialogue, under the Irish Chairmanship of the Mediterranean Contact Group, intensified, as manifested by the increased level of interest and range of topics at the OSCE Mediterranean Conference that took place in Budva, Montenegro on 10 and 11 October.

At the Vilnius Ministerial Council, a decision was taken on Partners for Co-operation. It called for a broadening of the existing dialogue and co-operation with Partners for Co-operation across the three dimensions of the OSCE's work. It also reconfirmed the openness of participating States to consider future applications for partnership from interested countries.

Afghanistan was also high on the international agenda in 2011. The CiO visited Afghanistan in May. OSCE representatives taking part in high-level meetings including the Regional Conference on Afghanistan in Istanbul on 2 November, and the International Afghanistan Conference in Bonn on 5 December, underscored the Organization's readiness to contribute to international efforts to promote co-operation between Afghanistan and its neighbours in the OSCE region.

At the Astana Summit, Heads of State or Government stressed the need *"to contribute effectively, based on the capacity and national interest of each participating State, to collective international efforts to promote a stable, independent, prosperous and democratic Afghanistan."* This call was reinforced in an MC decision taken in Vilnius on *Strengthening OSCE Engagement with Afghanistan*. Among other things, the decision tasks the Secretary General with developing a new comprehensive package of activities with Afghanistan across all three dimensions.

On 28 October, Mongolia – an OSCE Partner for Co-operation – expressed its interest in becoming an OSCE participating State. This initiative was well-received, and discussed at a high-level informal lunch at the Vilnius Ministerial Council. In an MC decision, Mongolia's application was welcomed and the incoming Chairmanship was tasked to follow-up the request with a view to adopting a decision on Mongolia becoming the OSCE's 57th participating State. Mongolia also hosted the annual conference of OSCE Asian Partners for Co-operation in Ulaanbaatar on 23-25 May.

Effectiveness and Efficiency of the Organization

In its work programme, the Chairmanship pledged to *"make best use of the Organization's comparative advantages and strengths, especially as the current global financial situation demands us to do more with less"*. The Chairmanship has worked closely throughout the year with the current and former Secretaries General, the Heads of Institutions and the Heads of Missions to ensure maximum efficiency.

In 2011, the Chairmanship took steps to strengthen the legal framework of the OSCE. Several meetings of the Informal Working Group on "Strengthening the Legal Framework of the OSCE" were held, and a non-paper was issued on "Principles for a discussion on a Constituent Document for the OSCE".

Throughout the year, the Chairmanship helped explore further ways of involving the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly (PA) into all dimensions of the Organization's work, while the Secretary General has explored possibilities for strengthening co-operation between the PA and the OSCE executive structures. The Chairmanship, the Secretary General and other representatives of the executive structures were invited to, and took part in, meetings of the OSCE PA.

A major challenge for the Lithuanian Chairmanship was to seek consensus on the appointment of a new Secretary General for the OSCE after Kazakhstan announced the vacancy for the post on 14 December 2010. The Chairmanship conducted the process in the spirit of fairness and transparency, and in close consultation with all participating States. On 30 June, the Ministerial Council adopted a decision on the appointment of Ambassador Lamberto Zannier of Italy as Secretary General of the OSCE, effective 1 July. Ambassador Zannier succeeds Marc Perrin de Brichambaut of France, who had served as Secretary General since June 2005.

The Chairmanship also successfully steered the process of the re-appointment of the Director of the ODIHR, Janez Lenarčič of Slovenia.

Future Chairmanships

Throughout 2012, Lithuania worked closely with its Troika colleagues, Kazakhstan and Ireland, in order to ensure continuity in the leadership of the Organization. At the Vilnius Ministerial Council, a decision was taken that the next MC will take place in the city of Dublin on 6 and 7 December 2012.

The Ministerial Council in Vilnius put on silence procedure a decision on the Chairmanships of Switzerland and Serbia in 2014 and 2015, respectively.

Conclusion: Progressing towards the Security Community

In his opening address to the Permanent Council on 13 January 2011, the Chairperson-in-Office, Foreign Minister Ažubalis, said that *"by the time we meet in Vilnius for the OSCE Ministerial on 6-7 December, I believe we shall:*

- *register tangible progress in addressing protracted conflicts;*
- *significantly improve our record of implementation of media freedom commitments;*
- *enhance the OSCE profile with regard to transnational threats, including those emanating from the territory of Afghanistan;*
- *define the OSCE's role in our energy security dialogue, and*
- *promote tolerance education throughout the OSCE area in order to combat hate crimes and discrimination."*

Most of these objectives have been met.

From a broader strategic perspective, the objective and responsibility of Lithuania's Chairmanship of the OSCE in 2011 was to help participating States move closer to realizing their common vision of a free, democratic, common and indivisible Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian security community stretching from Vancouver to Vladivostok, rooted in agreed principles, shared commitments and common goals. This is a major task, and it will take

time. Nonetheless, as demonstrated by this report, we believe that progress has been made. We urge participating States, under future Chairmanships starting with Ireland in 2012, to build on these meaningful steps. In this effort, they can count on Lithuania's full support.