



## **Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe**

**Secretary General Lamberto Zannier**

**Report to the Ministerial Council**

Hamburg, 8 December 2016

Mr. Chairperson, lieber Frank-Walter,

Thank you for your warm welcome. I would like to express my appreciation for your personal commitment and active leadership of the OSCE this year, and for the hard work of your dedicated teams in Berlin and Vienna led by Ambassadors Leendertse and Pohl.

Ministers,

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

This is my final address to the Ministerial Council, so I would like to take this opportunity to briefly reflect on how the Organization has responded to a rapidly evolving security landscape during my tenure. We have seen the OSCE reassert its relevance, become more visible, and align its work ever more closely with the global peace and security agenda. I am proud to leave the Organization in a stronger and more prominent position than when I took up my post.

However, it is easy to become discouraged when we consider the array of challenges our region faces today, *stürmische Zeiten*, as Frank-Walter has said— from armed conflict, terrorism and violent extremism to mass movements of people and climate change, just to name a few. Such challenges can only be dealt with effectively through co-operative and co-ordinated approaches. Yet, we are seeing growing divides within our region and, increasingly, within our societies, which is cause for real concern.

We are also seeing a progressive erosion of the vision of the OSCE as a platform for engagement by countries with different perspectives and interests which nonetheless recognize that they must work together to address shared threats to security. Today, the OSCE's unity of purpose is constantly being tested, together with the validity of the principles on which the Organization is founded and on which your own relations are based. As a result, the OSCE is increasingly being used as a forum for mutual accusations and recriminations about violations of key commitments. Instead of real debate, we hear carefully scripted statements.

To return to the path of pragmatic co-operation requires mutual trust and confidence, which comes through open communication. We must revitalize our dialogue and return to genuine debate and engagement to help us find co-operative approaches to shared problems. The OSCE has the potential to play a unifying role, but it is up to you, the participating States, to decide how to use it.

The crisis in and around Ukraine has dominated the OSCE agenda for almost three years. Empowered by the participating States, the Organization responded quickly and nimbly to the unfolding crisis, facilitating the political process and efforts to de-escalate tensions, and flexibly adapting to new tasks on the ground as the conflict developed. We have proved to be an organization with room for maneuver, a bridge-builder trusted by all sides. As our role has evolved, expectations for us have increased – in spite of difficulties in the political process and on the ground. However, ultimately it is the responsibility of the sides to end the conflict.

It is also up to the sides to ensure that the Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine is able to fulfill its mandate. This means guaranteeing the security of our monitors and giving them full and unfettered access to all areas covered by their mandate. This also applies to SMM equipment used to assist with monitoring. The number of incidents of harassment, intimidation and targeting of our monitors is growing. From January to the end of November, SMM personnel came under fire 19 times. The Mission's UAVs and cameras continue to be jammed and shot down. The SMM is a civilian operation, and our monitors remain unarmed. I salute their courage and commitment to do all that they can to facilitate peace and improve conditions for people living in the conflict zone. Hostile actions against our monitors – your monitors – must be resolutely condemned, and the sides must enforce accountability for any such actions by their combatants.

The peaceful resolution of the protracted conflicts in the South Caucasus and Moldova also depends on the political will of the sides in these conflicts. There is a need to re-energize the negotiating formats and to explore other approaches, so we will redouble our efforts to seek paths toward mutually acceptable and sustainable solutions.

Tools and mechanisms for conflict prevention and crisis management are all the more important when tensions are high, so I welcome efforts to strengthen the role of the OSCE in all phases of the conflict cycle. I also welcome Minister Steinmeier's initiative to renew discussion on conventional arms control. We must build on this fresh momentum. In October, I convened a Security Days roundtable which concluded that there are many options for reducing the growing risk of close military encounters, enhancing transparency, and modernizing arms control instruments to address new challenges.

Dear Ministers,

Today we face an unprecedented confluence of transnational and global challenges to security whose complexity, scale and interconnectedness require comprehensive and coordinated responses at every level. No single country can tackle them alone.

The OSCE has long acknowledged that security in our region is inextricably linked to that of neighboring regions, and today's complex global security environment has brought us even closer to our Asian and Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation. I encourage the participating States to lift out-of-area restrictions on OSCE activities designed to benefit the Mediterranean Partners; this would make practical co-operation easier and more efficient.

We also need to embrace innovative forms of multilateral co-operation that complement traditional intergovernmental dynamics by mobilizing the capacities and resources of civil society, academia, media and business. Building flexible coalitions and strategic partnerships can help us to confront transnational and global challenges more effectively.

In this spirit, fostering OSCE engagement with civil society, academia, women and youth has been one of my personal priorities, and I am pleased that a number of initiatives to channel their voices into our debate are flourishing. The OSCE Network of think tanks and academic institutions and the New-Med Network of Mediterranean think tanks have provided valuable

analysis and recommendations, and Security Days continue to stimulate informal discussions on key issues on the OSCE agenda. For example, a recent Security Days event on migration triggered a larger debate within the Organization that is helping us to consolidate our work in many migration-related areas into a more strategic approach. Next March, I will host a Security Days debate featuring mayors of major cities to introduce their innovative responses to global security challenges into our policy debate.

The OSCE is intensifying its efforts to support the role of youth in preventing and resolving conflicts, countering global and transnational challenges, and building peace across our region. And we continue to reinforce the role of women in all stages of conflict prevention and resolution, and to mainstream gender into OSCE policies, programs and activities.

Excellencies,

OSCE Field Operations are important partners for their host countries, supporting them in the implementation of their OSCE commitments. Recently, however, we have experienced pushback from some host countries, so perhaps it is time to take a fresh look at our model. Over time, the needs of host countries evolve, so without losing sight of the Organization's core mandate to promote security and stability, we should invest more in providing tailored practical assistance and informing the public about OSCE values, principles and commitments. We could consider opening OSCE offices with a regional or thematic focus, which could be located also west of Vienna. Regardless of the model, we always engage with governments to ensure that OSCE Field Operations are providing added value.

Delivering added value is a consideration in everything we do. The OSCE has proved to be an effective tool for addressing conflict, providing political space for dialogue and tools to follow up and deliver. As the range of the Organization's activities has expanded, this has not been matched with adequate resources. A number of you emphasized at the informal ministerial events this fall in Potsdam and New York that the OSCE deserves more financial and human resources. As the OSCE remains a very lean, inexpensive and efficient organization, the sustained policy of Zero Nominal Growth applied to our very modest budget is limiting the effectiveness of our Organization.

I would also like to highlight the OSCE's lack of legal personality, which poses a major risk to the Organization. Our staff deserve adequate duty of care and privileges and immunities to protect them, so I have begun seeking bilateral standing arrangements with participating States as a stop-gap measure until consensus on the Organization's legal status can be reached.

Dear Ministers,

I urge you and your delegations to put more trust in the Organization, and to give my successor more room to manage its daily affairs. Moreover, constructive engagement on scales of contribution, the unified budget, legal personality and other institutional issues would strengthen the OSCE's capacity to respond to emerging crises and other challenges to security in our region.

In closing, I would like to thank the hard-working staff of the OSCE. It is thanks to their tireless dedication that we are able to accomplish so much. I would also like to praise the enhanced co-operation and co-ordination among the Secretariat, the Institutions and the Parliamentary Assembly.

Next year our region will continue to struggle with very serious challenges. I look forward to working with the incoming Austrian Chairmanship, and you have my assurances of our continued commitment to support the implementation of your decisions and your efforts to restore peace and stability in our region and beyond.

Thank you very much.