



EMBASSY OF GEORGIA TO THE REPUBLIC OF AUSTRIA
PERMANENT MISSION OF GEORGIA TO THE OSCE AND OTHER
INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS IN VIENNA

S T A T E M E N T

Of the Deputy Foreign Minister of Georgia H.E. Mr. Sergi Kapanadze

At the OSCE Annual Security Review Conference

**Session II: Early warning, conflict prevention, crisis management, conflict
resolution and post-conflict rehabilitation: lessons learned and way ahead**

Vienna, July 1, 2011

Mr. Chairman,

Distinguished Audience, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Allow me to welcome our keynote speakers at this Conference and thank them for their excellent presentations, which have raised a number of relevant, interesting and intellectually challenging questions.

Issues related to the peaceful resolution of conflicts are at the heart of the OSCE's mandate and activities. They are also at the heart of my country's foreign and security policy.

By the book, the OSCE is a primary organization for the peaceful settlement of disputes and a key instrument for early warning, conflict prevention and resolution, crisis management and post-conflict rehabilitation. But this is by the book. In reality, OSCE's role in conflict resolution is often challenged and seldom successful. We all acknowledge it. Due to various reasons, the conflict resolution and prevention mandate that the OSCE was granted more than two decades ago, is challenged.

Over the last few years, the OSCE community has hardly managed to advance forward in the field of conflict resolution. In the aftermath of the Russia-Georgia war,

we started the debates on the effectiveness of the Organization and initiated the dialogue on the European security, the Corfu process. That process is now stalled. In 2010, we got involved in a new venture that intended to establish a comprehensive roadmap, the Plan of Action. We never managed to adopt it.

Throughout last years, we were trying to reinvigorate the existing mechanisms and devise the new ones in the sphere of conflict prevention, conflict resolution and post-conflict rehabilitation. Regardless of our attempts, we have not adopted a single new mechanism. Moreover, during the last twenty years, despite facing dozens of crises, the OSCE has very seldom resorted to revoking the rare instruments and mechanisms that it disposes. And when some states intend to do so, they are often discouraged rather than encouraged.

And last, but not the least, we have been failing to adopt Political Declarations for almost a decade now. I am afraid that we risk having another round of *deja vu* in Vilnius later this year.

Unfortunately, this lack of progress on a general scale is also translated into a lack of progress in the Georgian context. We have lost a Mission of OSCE to Georgia - a unique multidimensional presence, which was an actor of change on the ground. We have never managed to recover it, or to substitute it, or to even build on the already existing proposals to return the OSCE to Georgia. We need OSCE in Georgia but we are unable to get it there.

My President has called for the dialogue with Russia last year. We have reiterated this call for the dialogue at all levels. We have called for the dialogue in this forum - the Organization which is supposed to be all about the dialogue. We never managed to get one. Neither have we managed to get the OSCE involved in the dialogue process between Georgia and Russia.

In the context, when the OSCE plays a role in the Geneva Discussions, it becomes unable to get involved in the Incident Prevention and Response Mechanisms. In the Tskhinvali IPRM we have half-baked participation of the OSCE and in the Gali IPRM we have no participation of the OSCE. It seems to me that we are failing in this area as well.

Let's turn now to the humanitarian issues:

In 2008, the OSCE human rights watchdogs - HCNM and ODIHR issued a comprehensive report on the human rights situation in the occupied Georgian regions and the series of recommendations how to improve the situation on the ground. Needless to say that these recommendations have been ignored by the perpetrators of the crimes. But has OSCE tried to follow up on these recommendations? No, it has not. Once again, OSCE is failing to fulfill its human dimension mandate in this particular case as well.

Two days ago, the United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution regarding the internally displaced persons from Abkhazia, Georgia and the Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia, Georgia. General Assembly has once again, already fourth time in the last four years, upheld the right to return for the displaced. In OSCE, in contrast, we don't even have an acquis related to the IDPs and refugees, while this issue is of a serious importance to a number of OSCE participating States. In this context, we welcome the efforts by the current chair of the OSCE in this direction and hope that we will manage to achieve at least some progress in this field during this year.

Dear Colleagues,

I have deliberately avoided discussing the reasons, or may be a single reason, why OSCE has failed in these areas. We all know the answer to this question. Mr. Bugajski has discussed the problem with the decision-making, enabling one party to instigate a conflict and block the Organization's decision-making. I think he got right to the core of the main problem.

I mentioned these problems with intention to remind all of us that the OSCE is facing a danger of becoming a mere talk shop, without a power to prevent, without a power to act and without a power to reform itself. It is facing a danger of becoming a mere institution of information exchange, and thus, could risk losing its profound role in the European security architecture, unless it has already lost this role to the delight of some.

Dear Colleagues,

My country today faces some serious challenges. You are aware of them. I will not waste your time in discussing the militarization of Georgia's occupied regions and the plight of the displaced and the security incidents that take place almost every week. Neither will I engage in the details of how the human rights of the residents of the occupied territories are violated. We regularly provide you with the update and will continue to do so in the formats of the Permanent Council and the FSC.

However, I have to bring to the attention of this forum one relatively new challenge that we face - the challenge of the state sponsored terrorism from a neighbouring state, something that we have not seen before in this region. I was very glad to hear that one of our keynote speakers also mentioned this as a new challenge requiring our immediate attention.

There is an overwhelming evidence of engagement of the Russian special services in the sabotage and terrorism activities on the Georgian soil. These acts are usually organized from the occupied territories. We have foiled many of the terrorist attempts, but unfortunately, several have gone through and two persons have been killed as a result.

This is a new type of threat that we are witnessing. We have shared the information with you all. After having exhausted attempts to deal with this issue in a constructive way, we have called on Russia to stop this outrageous terror campaign. Without having a response from Moscow, we are still hopeful that common sense will prevail. Let me stress, that if Moscow continues to mastermind and undertake the terrorist acts, we will face an immense challenge. And let's make no mistake, if these acts go unaccounted and unanswered, this will not be just Georgia suffering from the terrorist acts; other neighbours of Russia will equally have to confront this threat.

My real questions to this audience are the following: Does the OSCE have tools to deal with such new threats? Do we have the instruments and mechanisms to counter these threats or diminish the threats emanating from the terrorist activities sponsored by one of the OSCE participating States? Do we have instruments of effective information exchange and fact finding when it comes to the state sponsored terrorism?

Dear Colleagues,

Let me sum up my presentation: there has been no significant progress in the resolution of the Russia-Georgia conflict. The conflict is still there. The Elephant is still in the room. And the OSCE still has a role to play.

Neither has there been a progress in reforming the OSCE into a more effective, more resolute and more flexible institution, contrary to our goals and interests.

Dear Colleagues,

This is not a cry of despair from us. Georgia always aligns with the position that there is a hope, granted that there is enough political will and a concerted action from the OSCE participating States to have a dialogue and pressure those, who are willing to break the existing architecture, without offering anything better.

In the end, I would like to close by emphasizing that the OSCE remains a unique Organization, which was designed to deal with the security related challenges from Vancouver to Vladivostok. Over the recent years we have seen this Organization's role decline and capabilities – diminish. Regardless, I remain hopeful that we can still make the OSCE relevant and adequate to modern challenges.

Thank You!