



Address

**by Dr Dimitrij Rupel, Chairman-in-Office of the OSCE
to the United Nations Security Council
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Mr President,
Secretary General,
Distinguished Members of the Security Council,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a pleasure and an honour to address the United Nations Security Council on behalf of the OSCE.

This is not the happiest of times to be OSCE Chairman-in-Office. As you undoubtedly know, the OSCE still does not have a budget for 2005 – some 10 weeks into the year – nor do we have agreement on new scales of contribution.

There is a lively discussion about the future of the Organization, at a high level. All of this comes during a year when the OSCE is supposed to be celebrating its contribution to promoting security and co-operation in Europe – reflecting on thirty years since the signing of the Helsinki Final Act and fifteen years since the Charter of Paris set out a vision for a Europe whole and free.

Responding to Calls for Reform in a Changing Europe

Is the OSCE in crisis? It is certainly in transition.

Some participating States have complained of double standards, and have called for a review of how we monitor elections. There was no agreement on extending the mandate of the Border Monitoring Operation in Georgia. There has been no consensus among Foreign Ministers of OSCE States at the conclusion of the last two Ministerial Council meetings.

In answer to the calls for reform, I have appointed a Panel of Eminent Persons to make recommendations on strengthening the effectiveness of the OSCE. This will be followed by high level consultations and then a Ministerial Council in Ljubljana.

There is a working group on reform that is looking at, among other things, updating the organization's rules of procedure. A decision has been taken that clarifies and strengthens the mandate of the Secretary General, and I am currently in the process of finding a successor to Jan Kubis whose term expires this June. We are also looking at how to improve the effectiveness of our field operations.

I see this process as an opportunity more than a crisis. I believe that challenges to the OSCE's relevance and strategic direction have shaken some States out of their complacency and brought out into the open some issues that had been festering below the surface for some time. If there are strong differences of opinion about security in Europe, the OSCE is the ideal place to talk about them. So let's talk. And if things need to be improved, let's do it.

One of the OSCE's strengths is its ability to adapt to the challenges of the day. Changes in the EU, NATO and the Council of Europe reflect a Europe in transition, partly as a result of EU and NATO enlargement, but also because of coping with new threats to security. Organizations must remain dynamic to remain relevant, and the OSCE is no exception. So I welcome the reform debate, and initiatives to further strengthen the Organization – not to kill it.

As you know, the OSCE is a regional arrangement in the sense of Chapter VIII of the UN Charter. We therefore read with interest the report of the UN High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change and hope for bold decisions as to take greater use of Chapter VIII of the UN Charter and to enhance further the cooperation of the UN with regional organizations.

The OSCE went through a similar process two years ago when it drew up a Strategy to Address Threats to Security and Stability in the Twenty-first Century that was adopted at the Maastricht Ministerial Council in December 2003.

Through the implementation of this Strategy I believe that the OSCE can take on some of the UN's burden in the OSCE area. As the UN Panel noted, the Security Council's ability to more

proactively prevent and respond to threats could be strengthened by making fuller and more productive use of regional organizations. The OSCE is well positioned and well-equipped to do so.

The Panel also concluded that the UN should take fuller advantage of the early warning mechanisms of regional organizations, and draw on their normative standards to guide preventive efforts.

The OSCE has a well-earned reputation in early warning, early action and conflict prevention. There are areas, like preventing inter-ethnic conflict and regulating the marking and tracing, as well as the brokering and transfer, of small arms and light weapons where we are even more progressive than UN standards. The OSCE also co-ordinates assistance on the ratification and implementation of twelve UN conventions and protocols on anti-terrorism. And we work with UNECE on addressing economic and environmental threats to security. We complement each other's work well, and there is scope for further co-operation.

In Kosovo, the OSCE is an integral part of the UNMIK pillar structure. This is a good example of how a regional organization can complement UN efforts and enhance its capability.

In this important year for Kosovo I believe that the OSCE can play a key role in the standards review process and remain part of the international presence in Kosovo. The OSCE has considerable expertise in national minority issues, policing, and building effective public institutions which are so essential for the peaceful and sustainable development of Kosovo. The OSCE's potential should be used to the full.

Coping With a Clash of Principles

The case of Kosovo highlights an issue that we need to come to terms with in the international community, including the OSCE area, namely reconciling the desire for self-determination with the preservation of the territorial integrity of States. In parts of Moldova and Georgia, and in the disputed territory of Nagorno-Karabakh the OSCE is actively trying to resolve conflicts that are sometimes referred to as frozen, but which lately have started to thaw. In these cases the OSCE has clear mandates and is one of the lead agencies on the ground. There may be other examples of disputed autonomy where the OSCE could play a role.

I am encouraged by the slow but steady progress being made in the dialogue between Armenia and Azerbaijan.

I hope that recent changes in Ukraine and a new post-election environment in Moldova will enable a new attempt to resolve the Transnistrian conflict.

And the OSCE is working with the parties to reduce tensions in South Ossetia, Georgia and to promote demilitarization, build confidence, and achieve a lasting settlement.

In all of these cases, I urge you the members of the Security Council to support the OSCE's efforts, particularly those of you who are mediators in the conflicts or have influence over the parties.

It is difficult for inter-state organizations to deal with non-state actors, even if – in some cases – they are de facto authorities. There are times when the leverage of powerful States – including permanent members of this Council – can be crucial. I urge you to exert that pressure in the context of OSCE mediation efforts to help resolve these long-standing conflicts.

Another important issue in the Panel's report is the clash between the concept of "responsibility to protect" and the principle of non-intervention in the internal affairs of a state.

This is something that, at least when it comes to human rights, the OSCE is very clear and progressive on. In 1991, at a meeting in Moscow, OSCE States agreed – and I quote – "that commitments undertaken in the human dimension of the OSCE are matters of direct and legitimate concern to all participating States and do not belong exclusively to the internal affairs of the State concerned".

This legitimate intrusiveness is the basis on which participating States hold each other accountable for the implementation of their commonly agreed commitments. It is the justification for having OSCE Missions in participating States, helping the host States to deal with specific challenges. And it is the reason why the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities or Representative on Freedom of the Media can, respectively, go to any State throughout the OSCE region to prevent inter-ethnic conflict and ensure respect for free media. I believe that this type of deep engagement

is unprecedented. And it needs to be preserved, all the while ensuring that it is done in a co-operative spirit.

The Need for a Comprehensive, Multi-lateral Approach

Mr. President,
Mr. Secretary General,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

The UN panel report highlights threats to global security from which no State or region of the world is immune.

In our inter-connected world, security is indivisible. Multi-faceted challenges require a multi-lateral response that takes a comprehensive view of security.

The OSCE is doing its part. As already noted, it is a leader in early warning and conflict prevention. It has a limited but focused role in conflict settlement. And it has a proven track record in post-conflict rehabilitation or peace-building.

It is an inclusive and truly regional organization that provides a valuable forum for dialogue on security issues of common concern.

It has unique Institutions with strong mandates dealing with national minorities, freedom of the media, and democratic institutions and human rights. The OSCE is the lead election monitoring body in Europe whose reports are seen as an important quality control stamp.

The 18 OSCE field missions represent an invaluable on-the-ground presence that offer concrete assistance to participating States.

And the OSCE has quickly developed capabilities to deal with new threats to security including in anti-trafficking, counter-terrorism, border management and policing.

When addressing new threats to security, the bottom line for the OSCE is upholding the rule of law. For example, we have to be sure that efforts to combat terrorism are not done in a way that

violates human rights. Or that border guards learn sophisticated techniques and a proper code of conduct. Or that human trafficking is tackled by effective investigation, law enforcement and prosecution.

Policing is a classic example. In many tense situations, one does not need blue helmets, one needs effective policing. Good policing has a vital role to play in the prevention of conflict, the preservation of social stability during political crises and the post-conflict rehabilitation of societies. Without effective law enforcement, respect for the rule of law and the operation of institutions responsible for upholding it, there can be little likelihood of social, political or economic development in any State.

The OSCE runs police development units in the Western Balkans. A police assistance programme has been launched in Kyrgyzstan and others are in preparation in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia.

No other international organization currently possesses the potential to strengthen long-term law enforcement capacity- and institution-building in the OSCE region in the States most susceptible to crime, corruption and human rights violations.

Don't Take the OSCE for Granted

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I highlight policing because it is a good example of the type of programmatic, hands-on, work that the OSCE does in addressing the needs of States and communities across Europe.

States should not under-estimate or take for granted the quiet but useful work that Organizations like the OSCE do to make the world a safer place.

We can do things better, and I welcome the reform debate on both sides. But in the process we should not lose sight of the good things that we do, the important commitments that have been agreed to by consensus, and the merits of effective multi-lateralism.

Europe is not yet whole and free as envisioned at the Paris Summit in 1990. There is plenty of work to do, and we must remain vigilant that the progress that has been in the past few years is not reversed.

I am confident that the reform process will make even more people – particularly States – aware, or reminded, of the usefulness of the OSCE and spur them to invest the necessary resources and political will to make it even more effective.

The OSCE should also be more open to sharing its experience and expertise with others. In 2004 the OSCE, at the request of the Afghan authorities, sent an Election Support Team to Afghanistan. Earlier this year the OSCE sent a needs assessment team to the Palestinian territories to see what help the OSCE could offer on elections. Mongolia is now an OSCE Partner for Co-operation. So you see that the OSCE has an impact beyond its vast region, and could develop such relations even further.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The world has changed dramatically in the past thirty years, since a group of 35 Heads of State came together at Helsinki on the first of August 1975 to sign a Final Act devoted to improving and intensifying their relations and to contributing in Europe to peace, security, justice and co-operation as well as rapprochement.

The OSCE has also changed dramatically during that period, evolving from a conference into a highly sophisticated organization.

But the challenge remains the same, namely for the States that participate in the OSCE to promote better relations among themselves and ensure conditions in which their people can live in true and lasting peace.

We must continue to work together towards that goal.

Thank you for your attention.