

STATEMENT
BY MR. ADRIAN SEVERIN, PRESIDENT OF THE OSCE
PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY AT THE OSCE PERMANENT
COUNCIL, VIENNA, 27 JUNE 2002

Mr. Chairman,

First, I would like to say that I am very pleased to be here and to address this distinguished Council again.

I must thank the Chairman of the Permanent Council, Ambassador Pimentel, for his invitation to address the Council on behalf of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, in order to tell you about our activities and priorities. I shall also have the opportunity to do this in the context of the Eleventh Annual Session to be held in a few days time in Berlin. Yesterday, I attended the OSCE Ministerial Troika meeting in Lisbon and I presented the Assembly's views on all those issues the OSCE is currently facing to the political leadership of the Organization

Mr. Chairman,

The last time I addressed this Permanent Council, in August 2001, the world was significantly different. The tragic events of 11 September shocked us, proving that we are more vulnerable than we thought and that without solidarity we cannot cope with the major dangers of the post-bipolar world. It is our duty to transform these threats into new challenges and these challenges into new opportunities. The 11 September 2001 brought to the top of our agendas something that many countries around this table have been experiencing for years: the danger of terrorism, which poses one of the most serious threats to international peace and security in our times and targets the very foundation of our civilization. I believe the OSCE and the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly have firmly grasped the challenge presented by terrorism. I also believe that, albeit slowly, we are moving ahead with the implementation of the Bucharest and Bishkek Action Plans.

In this respect, I would like – on behalf of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly - to congratulate the Portuguese Chairmanship for the high-level conference organized in Lisbon on 12 June. The conclusions of this conference highlighted the fact that the actions and initiatives of the OSCE in the fight against terrorism will only produce sustainable results if developed within a larger and over-arching framework. Co-ordination, co-operation and the development of greater synergies amongst the various organizations and institutions is essential if we are to succeed in preventing and combating terrorism.

Furthermore, the theme of the Eleventh Annual Session of the Assembly will be “Confronting terrorism: a global challenge in the 21st century”. In this respect *The Berlin Declaration of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly* to be adopted at the end of the Assembly’s Session will cover, from our parliamentary perspective, a wide range of political, economic, and human rights issues which are matters of concern to the OSCE and its citizens in the fight against terrorism. The Parliamentary Assembly is convinced that the struggle against terrorism should be carried out in accordance with international human rights obligations. In other words, fighting against terrorism means protecting of human rights.

Certainly, the OSCE is not in the position to deploy troops and to use military means against the terrorist networks. Nonetheless the OSCE could play a major role in addressing the roots of terrorism and that kind of environment which favours terrorism. In this respect the OSCE could and should undertake a political role. Among other things we must fight for the standardization of the main concepts of the anti-terrorist fight and act against the practice of double standards. We must exclude any possibility of operating with concepts like “good terrorism” and “bad terrorism”, “positive terror” and “negative terror”, “good bastards” and “bad bastards”. We must react vigorously against any attempt to transform the fight against terrorism into a fight for geo-political gains, thus transforming our declared goal into a means of achieving goals of a different nature. We must work courageously in order to find a political solution to the problem raised by the existence of the “pseudo-States” which by their mere existence challenge the current international order and which at least potentially are havens for terrorism and organized crime. We must define appropriate policies in order to deal as efficiently as possible with those incubators of terrorism and organized crime, the refugee and internally displaced people camps. We have to promote inter-cultural and inter-religions dialogue in a very active way, thus adding another dimension to our collective security: cultural security. We must address the problems of migration in a more pragmatic and sophisticated way. Thus we must create in Europe the cultural, social, institutional and logistic structures which can receive, absorb and integrate waves of migrants while preserving the respect for diversity. At the same time we should identify the appropriate cultural and economic ways of offering the peoples outside Europe a decent future in their own countries, thus giving them good reasons to stay home. We must find ways and promote policies capable of transforming European society into a meritocratic society and of transforming European States into civic multicultural entities. We should also address in a pragmatic, and not dogmatic, way, those problems related to the coexistence, on OSCE territory, of an emerging global society, national cultures, and tribal social traditions. At present contact between these cultures

breeds organized crime, corruption and terrorism. The OSCE should work for their peaceful integration and for their convergent development. The structure both of its membership and its field operations, means that the OSCE is the Organization best placed to cope with such challenges.

The Eleventh Annual Session of the Assembly will also deal with numerous other political, economic, and social matters regarding the OSCE, including the increasing role of the Parliamentarians in the Organization.

Mr. Chairman,

I am convinced that my presence here today, as on previous occasions, will contribute to the strengthening of the existing dialogue and co-operation between the governmental and parliamentary sides of the OSCE. During my two years' mandate as President of the Assembly I have paid particular attention to the promotion of the parliamentary dimension of the OSCE. This required closer and more active contact with the leadership of the governmental side of the OSCE and also increased responsibilities on a number of political issues, such as Belarus, Moldova, Kosovo, Caucasus, Central Asia, and leadership in election monitoring missions. I have also visited most of the participating States, on both sides of the Atlantic, and all of the OSCE field missions. I devoted my last official field visit as President to Yugoslavia and Bosnia and Herzegovina last week.

Members of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly continue to play an important role both in bringing public support to the OSCE as well as in acting as a link between the Organization and national parliaments and governments. The OSCE Parliamentary Assembly is today, after 11 years of existence, determined to fully implement its mandate established by the governments of the participating States at Summit level, and to act as a true parliamentary institution, thus providing the necessary democratic input into the Organization.

Within the Assembly, the need for more visibility, and to further expand our activities, and the increasing desire of Parliamentarians to have more input into the OSCE, was reflected in the first Winter Meeting of the Assembly that took place here in Vienna last February. The objectives of this additional statutory meeting, which is to be held every February in Vienna, were successfully accomplished. We had the opportunity of being briefed on current OSCE developments by senior officials of the OSCE governmental dimension and by the OSCE Secretary General. At the same time we had the opportunity to follow up the resolutions and declaration adopted in Paris, and to have preliminary discussions in the three General Committees for the following Annual Session.

The Standing Committee of the Assembly, at my suggestion, decided to establish an ad hoc committee to monitor and promote the implementation of the Parliamentary Assembly's policies concerning the strengthening of the parliamentary dimension of the OSCE and, in particular, the enhancement of transparency and accountability in the OSCE. The Committee takes a special interest in supporting the necessary dialogue with the governmental side of the OSCE to ensure that our policies are implemented as effectively as possible.

The OSCE's decision-making procedures, again in the context of strengthening the Organization, need reform. The consensus rule, combined with the lack of transparency, has led to a situation where one country can block any important proposal, and do so secretly, thus avoiding responsibility. In this connection I would like to point out, as I and my predecessors have done before, that we are not arguing for the removal of the general principle of consensus, but simply against the way in which this principle is abused either by the lack of transparency or by the single country veto practice which prevents the Organization from acting in a timely and effective manner.

Dear friends, after years of hard work within the OSCE I feel obliged to tell you frankly the following: firstly, this Organization is important only if we use it collectively for reaching the goal of our co-operative security. It would be a mistake to try to use it as a tool for the promotion of unilateral policies which one cannot promote within the framework of bilateral international relations. Those who refuse to reform the OSCE simply because they can control it for the time being are acting against their own strategic interests. Secondly, this Organization is useful only if it can make bold and comprehensive decisions in due time. A slow and reactive policy, diluted messages, vague undertakings, velvet phrases, endless Byzantine talks, a lot of energy consumed over petty issues, none of these can make the OSCE relevant. Those who want to block the Organization because they cannot control it for the time being are also acting against their strategic interests. Thirdly, this Organization is useful only if it retains its practice of being pragmatic and not dogmatic, which means if it realizes that its main role is to assist each and every participating State in building compatible institutions throughout the OSCE area, using the bricks of its own traditions. Neither the exacerbation of national distinctions nor the imposition of foreign models can work. All those who mislead the Organization by accepting commitments they have no intention of fulfilling are also acting against their strategic goals. As long as this kind of short-sighted negative mentality survives, the OSCE will continue to be in crisis and more and more of our citizens will ask themselves what this Organization is needed for and why they have to pay taxes for our existence.

Within the same context I would like to urge you to consider in a positive way the need for OSCE to get legal personality. Even if some have reservations

in respect of this idea I think that you should find a solution which must respond to the global interests of our Organisation.

Let me briefly outline what were, and what I believe will be, the priorities and objectives of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly both for the past months and for the months to come:

1. Increasing the Parliamentary Assembly's role and visibility through greater involvement in crisis and conflict prevention and management, and through greater added value brought by parliamentarians to governmental efforts. Parliamentarians were, and should remain, involved in operational and not just in normative activities. Thus parliamentary diplomacy could play a specific role in conflict prevention, crisis management and post conflict rehabilitation.

2. Improving co-operation between the Parliamentary Assembly and the other OSCE institutions while strengthening the institutional coherence of the Organization. In this respect the informal talks held in Salzburg between the Parliamentary Assembly and the OSCE provided the basis for strengthening the co-operation and co-ordination between the Assembly and the governmental institutions and structures of the Organization. There was a common view among participants that the Assembly is an important integral part of the OSCE and that increased interaction between representatives of the Assembly and officials of the governmental side would strengthen the Organization and help to promote the implementation of OSCE commitments as well as increase the overall efficiency of the Organization through a better synergy.

I believe and I want to repeat today, that the relationship between the OSCE and its Parliamentary Assembly, as an important autonomous institution at the political level, must be based on the principles of the five "C"s: Communication, Consultation, Co-ordination, Co-operation and Confidence.

In this spirit we have tried to conclude, at the level of the Chairman-in-Office and the Assembly President, a memorandum of understanding. This was not aimed at being either a legally-binding international treaty or a strategic document defining the long term policies of the OSCE. We have tried to achieve a joint statement of good will based on some common sense agreements structuring the modalities of our relationship. This was strategic to the extent that we have attempted to leave aside the petty problems of our past and to avoid them in the future, thus opening the way for a really political joint effort on major topics. The history of the discussions for concluding this memorandum of understanding perfectly illustrates the shortcomings of our Organization. We used up a lot of time in order to state the

obvious in the most ambiguous way. However, we may congratulate ourselves for reaching a compromise which hopefully will be accepted by every body. This is a good compromise since nobody is happy about it but everybody is able to live with it. The most important thing now is to implement it in good faith. This will be a real breakthrough in our relations and will certainly be mutually beneficial.

3. Developing the OSCE's political dimension through closer ties and co-operation between the Parliamentary Assembly and the national parliaments and enhancing the dialogue between the Parliamentary Assembly and the executive leadership of the participating States. The OSCE today needs a new political vision and a new political impetus. Such an impetus can only come from strengthening the involvement of national governments and parliaments in the processes of the Organization. This would also require a much-needed institutional rethinking. Within this framework we welcome the Portuguese Chairmanship's suggestion for the Assembly to initiate a session resembling a reinforced Standing Committee which should join the chairs of the Foreign Affairs and Defence Committees to our Standing Committee. At the same time I have asked the Assembly's International Secretariat to organize a type of Standing Committee of the national parliaments' Secretaries General in conjunction with one of the major Assembly events.

4. Strengthening the co-operation between the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly and the OSCE field missions both by setting up ad hoc committees and working groups and by launching the project of the contact parliamentary groups. The recent visit of members of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly to the OSCE Field Presences in Armenia and Georgia was the fourth such visit as part of the Assembly's initiative to engage parliamentarians more actively in the important fieldwork of the OSCE.

5. Strengthening the operational contribution of the Parliamentary Assembly. The ad hoc committees of the Assembly continue to serve as an important tool in furthering the development of democracy and stability in the OSCE region. The *Working Group on Belarus*, the *Parliamentary Team on Moldova*, the *Democracy Team on Kosovo*, and the *ad hoc Committee on Abkhazia*, greatly contribute to promoting political dialogue and seeking co-operation in areas of conflict. The groups have promoted in those different areas both respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and assistance in the development of legal and democratic institutions and processes, by providing advice to the parties involved on legal, constitutional and political matters. The special input of these ad hoc committees is that they are composed of politicians and have easy access to political decision-makers. It is my intention to re-organize the Assembly's work in South-Eastern Europe at our Session in Berlin

by proposing to the Standing Committee that the ad hoc Committee on the Stability Pact should be replaced by an ad hoc Committee on South-Eastern Europe. This ad hoc Committee will cover the Assembly's work on the Stability Pact and all such areas where the OSCE has a field mission in South-Eastern Europe.

The activities of our ad hoc committees put us in the position to draw certain political conclusions which we shall be always happy to share with you. Thus we believe that in respect of the current relations between OSCE and Belarus we must acknowledge that we have entered a new stage of development. In this stage we should not sacrifice the ends just because we want to preserve the means. A new stage asks for new means. The Advisory and Monitoring Group is an tool with which we have done a wonderful job. Some imagination is needed in order to continue our work in and with Belarus with new tools, as well. On the other hand I have to share with you the opinion of our Working Group for Belarus who think that the Belarusian parliamentarians should not remain hostages of the policies of their country's executive as long as they themselves display autonomy and try to act as much as possible as real parliamentarians. Finally we believe that our policy towards Belarus should not undermine the possibility of the emerging green shoots of democratic opposition in that country developing normally.

In respect of Transnistria we have noticed that the problem is characterized more and more by its criminal aspects. This criminal aspect is in itself an obstacle to a political solution. In this case, as well as in some similar ones, the international community should show determination in stopping the "business as usual policy" in the economic field with Transnistria and other similar pseudo-States.

Looking into the complex nature of the Transdniestrian crisis, as well as of the Abkhazian, South Ossetian, Nagorno-Karabakh and Chechnyan ones, the OSCE should, perhaps, try to find a package security solution covering all of them, a compromise solution which takes into consideration the legitimate interests of those concerned and which could be enforced with the joint participation of all the OSCE's main actors. The main problem there is not "independence against dependence". The problem is to make sure that these territories are sources of security and not insecurity for the neighbouring regions and how could they be integrated in a mutually profitable regional economic partnership.

The fight against international terrorism and the concentration of our energies in Central Asia should not make us forget the Balkans. Bearing in mind the post 11 September priorities, the OSCE should update its strategy in the

Balkans. In this respect it will be very important to re-establish or to consolidate the broken or fragile geo-strategic equilibrium in the area, by encouraging the normal development of relations between Yugoslavia and Croatia as well as of their trilateral co-operation with Bosnia and Herzegovina; by supporting the reintegration or the integration of Yugoslavia in all international structures (the Council of Europe among others) as well as the development of its capacity to play a normal political role within the subregional context (this should include our encouragement of the EU to conclude, as soon as possible, the Association and Stabilization Agreements with Yugoslavia, Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina); by establishing, with wisdom and imagination, on the foundations laid by the Dayton Agreements, a type of a modern trans-ethnic building, a true State of Bosnia and Herzegovina both civic and multicultural, a State where decentralization does not mean disintegration, respect of diversity does not mean eternal segregation, autonomy does not mean aversion, reconciliation does not mean a time needed to prepare for another round of confrontation; by helping Macedonia to return to normality, to consolidate the security of its borders, to exercise effectively sovereignty over its whole territory and to play the role of a crucial pillar of stability in the region without being hostage to developments in Kosovo; and by providing support for Albania to develop its modern statehood and by offering to all Albanian communities in the area the chance of protection from institutions belonging to those States of which they are citizens, and not from non-State entities organized on ethnic basis.

Particular issues in Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as in the whole region, are reconciliation, confidence building, education and rule of law; the OSCE should take the main responsibility on behalf of the international community as far as the education is concerned. I understand that Ambassador Beecroft will introduce this issue to the Permanent Council in more details and that the proposal has also budgetary implications. I would like to ask you to consider this proposal positively.

As far as Central Asia is concerned we believe that access by the countries of that area to a real system of economic aid is of a paramount importance. Only if we are able to improve their current economic conditions can we hope that the social cohesion of these societies and the modernization of their institutions can take place. The OSCE must find a way to combine these strategies.

6. Developing relations with the Mediterranean and Asian partners for Co-operation. I am proud to be the first President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly to have visited the OSCE Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation, having been invited by the parliaments of Morocco and Algeria last March. Furthermore, the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly will devote this

year's autumn Conference to the subject of security in the Mediterranean on the invitation of the Spanish Parliament. A Trans-Asian Parliamentary Conference will be convened also in the autumn hosted by the Parliament of Kazakhstan.

7. Developing relations and co-operation with other European and Euro-Atlantic parliamentary organizations with missions similar or complementary to those of the OSCE. The OSCE Parliamentary Assembly has developed close co-operation with other international parliamentary institutions and we now run projects together with the Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly and the European Parliament – often known as parliamentary troikas. The OSCE Parliamentary Assembly has been proud to chair during this past semester the Parliamentary Troika on the Stability Pact. Our chairmanship culminated with a Conference in Bucharest at the beginning of this month. In addition, the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Commonwealth of Independent States, organized the inter-parliamentary forum on combating terrorism held in St. Petersburg last March.

Mr Chairman,

This has been a general overview of the objectives and activities of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly during my Presidency. I must say I have been very proud to lead and to represent the parliamentarians of our participating States during this time.

Let me conclude by thanking you once again for your invitation to address the Permanent Council this morning for the last time in my capacity of President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly. Our common objective – parliaments and governments - is to make this great Organization a more efficient and a more reliable one.

During my mandate I have realized that the OSCE has enormous potential to help all of Europe become an area of peace, stability and co-operation. Also, I am sure – as I have said on numerous occasions – that this Permanent Council will find willing allies in their respective parliaments, particularly if you are willing to support the further development and involvement of the parliamentary dimension of the OSCE.

I am sure the new leadership of the Parliamentary Assembly will continue to work together with you after the Berlin Annual Session in the months ahead. Such co-operation will be in the positive best interests of all of us and for the general good of the OSCE.

Thank you very much!