



WELCOMING REMARKS

**by Dr Dimitrij Rupel, Chairman-in-Office of the OSCE
at the Reception on the Occasion of the Slovenian Chairmanship inauguration
13 January 2005**

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,
Friends,
Colleagues,

It is a particular privilege for me to have the opportunity of welcoming you tonight in this magnificent example of Vienna's finest architecture.

The Helsinki idea of promoting peaceful cooperation, including fostering military transparency, developing economic and scientific relations and promoting human rights in which peoples can, let me use the words, pursue their happiness has encouraged fascinating changes in East-West relations. Over the years the fault lines dividing the two became less and less visible, and the idea continued to serve as a valuable forum for political dialogue between States. Process of building security through co-operation in Europe has been our common mantra ever since.

Success of OSCE's aquis in confidence and security building, conflict prevention, early warning, post-conflict rehabilitation etc. has paradoxically made our role today less exclusive, since other international players have come on the scene. However, this does not diminish our Organisation's significance. Quite the opposite, new realities in the international arena drive us to face the new challenges - challenges that the OSCE has always been able to adapt quickly to. With its unique comprehensive approach to security and broad membership, institutions and numerous field missions, the OSCE should not be merely a participant in this pursuit, but one of its front-runners.

In doing this, let us not lose focus on *raison d'être* envisaged in the Helsinki spirit. Concrete people of the Participating States and positive changes in their every day lives, however distant may they sometimes seem, should be one of our prime directives that guides us in our work.

As I already said today, Slovenia takes the helm of the OSCE in choppy seas. I firmly believe in a consensus against re-opening, once already closed, fault lines, as there are much more interests and future prospects that bind us, than the ones dividing us.

My dear Bulgarian friend, my predecessor, Solomon Passy passed me a baton in Sofia, unfortunately not a magic wand. Napoleon once said, "The best way to keep one's word is not to give it." Therefore I am not going to give it, but I am going to keep it. I will keep the word that Slovenia, and myself personally, will make every effort in building consensus within the OSCE, promoting dialogue amongst its participating States and partners, and finding positive solutions for our common future.

I assume there is a consensus among us, for me to conclude, and for all of us to enjoy this evening.

Thank you, and welcome.