

Mr. Jeliu JELEV (President of the Republic, Bulgaria)

(interpretation from French): Mr. Chairman, Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, I would like, if I may, to start by remarking that if it is true that the Paris CSCE Summit has brought together a large number of Heads of State or Government who have been democratically elected, many more than there were at the Helsinki Conference fifteen years, and if it is true that the anti-totalitarian revolutions have brought more and more European countries into the fold of democratic social structures and are doing so faster and faster, this is all very largely thanks to the process which started in the capital of Finland. Of that I am profoundly convinced. For democrats in the former socialist countries the founding principles of the Helsinki Final Act were both a system of values for themselves and a firm basis in international law to be respected in the struggle against totalitarianism. We now come to realize that this process embodies the diplomatic strategy adopted by the free and liberal world to exert a constant pressure on communist regimes and lead inevitably to their irreversible downfall. In fact, what we are faced with here is a situation without precedent in history - the opportunity to establish a single economic, political and cultural space in which the standards of democracy, the market economy and human rights would be fully respected.

Bulgaria lost no time in taking its new place within that European space. The changes that we are living through, albeit sometimes at a slower pace than elsewhere, have even so been a further demonstration of the categorical and irreversible transformation undergone by other ex-socialist countries. The way the uprising came about in Bulgaria, a "Well-behaved Revolution", as we call it, put an end to a long experience of communism and committed us to authentic democratic institutions and structures.

For the first time in fifty years, true pluralist elections took place in our country, and a parliament, a president and a government were freely elected. Now that we have regained entirely all our inalienable sovereign rights as a nation, Bulgaria is emerging on the international stage as a free

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and independent actor capable of making the commitment to rejoin the community of those countries which determine their attitudes on international issues from a position of full independence.

Mr. Chairman, Bulgarian foreign policy, as I have already had occasion to say many times before large international gatherings, is committed to respecting these new principles and laying down new plans. One essential priority is to throw all our energies into participating in the European process, which is a framework for action and a starting point for all our international initiatives. The future of Bulgaria and the future of Europe are guaranteed, we believe, by the establishment of European structures for security and co-operation. There is no need, of course, to underline the particularly valued contribution the United States and Canada make to European stability.

The Warsaw Pact Organization as a military organization grouping a particular bloc of countries is in the process of being dismantled and consequently Bulgaria is eager to find new guarantees for its national security. We consider that the context established by the European process and also the enhancement of a code of behaviour, whose basic provisions are already laid down in the ten principles of the Helsinki Final Act, have much to offer. The strategic outlook for the continent is going through a process of far-reaching change to which we are witness. The passion that used to be expended in maintaining the balance between the two great powers is now seen as gratuitous and senseless. The goals at which the Negotiation on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe was aimed have been overtaken by events themselves. From now on, it behoves us to adopt new approaches in keeping with the changes underway, for a large number of the European countries have not been a part of the mechanism for conventional disarmament. We must make provision for ways of minimizing and neutralizing risks at the regional level.

It is our duty to find the political courage and the creative strength to plan for fail-safe mechanisms of consultation and co-operation that would be both bilateral and multilateral and which would not allow East-West competition to degenerate into some kind of stereotyped confrontation modelled on ancient historical rivalries. Some alarming trends are emerging which give rise to expectations of the resurrection of

national conflicts; growing ethnic hatreds and territorial claims. I fear very much that the fragile democracies of Eastern Europe are more likely to be threatened by violent manifestations of extreme nationalism and chauvinism than by the pathetic efforts of their totalitarian structures and behaviour to persist. The real danger lies in nationalist sentiments being held up as laudable, being made State policy. The natural desire of countries to regain their national traditions, restore their legitimate sovereignty and celebrate their national genius and dignity is in no way incompatible with modern and humanitarian trends that rule out all parochial selfishness. Promoting dialogue between those whose views differ and practising tolerance and wisdom are prerequisites for that European understanding for which we all yearn so ardently.

I consider that relations between the different ethnic groups are an issue of particular interest within the European process. Appropriate solutions will have to strictly respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of each country, along with the basic rights of their citizens. The crucial importance with which we view these problems requires that they should perhaps be grouped in a new "basket" for CSCE consideration. Over these last few months in Bulgaria we have shown every sign of political goodwill towards our neighbours. The basic rights of Bulgarians of Turkish descent cruelly trampled on by the previous regime, have now been restored. We hope that this act will have improved the somewhat tarnished image of our country while arousing the ancient values of our national spirit - tolerance, wisdom and calm, which for so many centuries made Bulgaria a refuge for people of different religions and races. Bulgaria, for instance, prevented the extermination of Bulgarian Jews in the Nazi death camps as a conscious choice. Our relations with Turkey have taken a turn for the better. Our rapprochement with Greece is gathering momentum and already bearing fruit. We attach great significance to this as a factor of basic security in the Balkans.

We are very interested by the economic aspects of co-operation. The Final Act of the Bonn Economic Conference showed the willingness of all the signatories to follow the basic principles of a market economy. My country

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is very appreciative of the commitment made concerning the reforms under way in the countries which are moving from a centralized planned economy to a market economy. Economic co-operation is of vital importance for the process of democratization in our country, a fact which will not be ignored by our European partners. We declare ourselves ready to shoulder the heavy burden of unpopular economic measures, but we are still counting on European solidarity.

It is up to our partners to respond so that their support should be clearly effective just as it will be highly appreciated.

A key problem is how we are to develop the European process and what specific mechanism should be brought into play. A flexible approach would allow the combination of new structures with existing organizations with which Bulgaria is already familiar through long years of co-operation. From now on we are to enjoy the status of "special guest" at the Council of Europe and we will be able to fulfil all our commitments for eventual membership of the Council. We support the initiative for a parliamentary assembly for the European process, based on the nucleus of the Council of Europe's Parliamentary Assembly, since the idea of a European parliament is very close to our hearts. It would be appropriate to set up a permanent body without a heavy bureaucratic structure, a secretariat which could be established in Prague, a natural choice as a focal point for cultural and political life in Europe.

In conclusion, I would like to express my warmest gratitude to the Executive Secretary and his colleagues, whose splendid organizational talents have contributed so much to the success of our work.

For this success at the Conference we also have to thank France, her President, François Mitterrand, and the spirit of freedom and tolerance which are the very breath of this marvellous city of Paris.

Thank you for your attention.