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Permanent Mission of the Federal Republic of Germany to the OSCE

**STATEMENT BY
AMBASSADOR BODEN AT THE 458TH MEETING OF THE
FORUM FOR SECURITY CO-OPERATION**

27 July 2005

Mr. Chairman,
Dear Colleagues,

After three years of work here in Vienna at the OSCE, I feel that this might be a proper occasion for a bit of stock-taking. I shall try to do that tomorrow at the meeting of the Permanent Council, but I should also like to take this opportunity, in the Forum, to share a few thoughts with you as my work draws to a close.

For my delegation and for myself personally our work in the Forum has never been a "side event". I do not need to emphasize that, for it is obvious. Certainly, during our chairmanship in the spring of 2003 this engagement was particularly obvious; that remains unchanged today.

We have repeatedly emphasized here, and rightly so, that the overall balance sheet of the achievements to which the OSCE and specifically the Forum for Security Co-operation (FSC) can point in dealing with politico-military questions is impressive. This is particularly true of the area of military confidence-building but also in general of the broader sphere of arms control. I have repeatedly been able to see for myself during my trips to our OSCE Partners for Co-operation in North-East Asia that we are envied for these achievements. They are regarded as setting an example to this day.

It would surely be wrong to look back with nostalgia at what has already been achieved and in so doing to overlook the tasks of the present day. There is no doubt that the political co-ordinates in the OSCE area have been fundamentally altered, especially since 1989. This in no way means that work on politico-military questions has become superfluous. We must, however, adjust that work to the new requirements. This is true of long-standing agreements, such as the Vienna Document, as well as of new tasks, such as those having to do with small arms and light weapons or the destruction of ammunition stockpiles.

It may be that one occasionally misses the sense of élan that characterized the work in this Forum a decade ago. In very recent times, the wrangling over the holding of a further seminar on military doctrines has provided an unfortunate example of what I am talking about. We should not allow this to become the rule.

One question currently under discussion has to do with the future of the FSC. A clear reference to this question is contained in the recent report of the Panel of Eminent Persons. We should face up to this discussion and not shy away from discarding long-cherished dogmas. What is at issue here is how further work on politico-military questions can be most efficiently handled in the OSCE. This is surely an opportunity for new thinking.

There is one particular development that cannot be ignored, and it too has been clearly referred to in the report of the Panel of Eminent Persons, namely the fact that within the OSCE we are having increasingly to deal with hybrid questions that affect all three classic dimensions in the work of the Organization. This inevitably leads us to the conclusion that in the future the work of the FSC must be even more closely tied in with the work of the Permanent Council and that more flexible use must be made of the existing structures than has been the case in the past. In my view, joint meetings of the Permanent Council and the FSC, like the ones we have recently held, should be even more frequently organized than has been the practice up to now. Whether we need more far-reaching structural changes is a question to be discussed with total candour. To this end, there is an urgent need for the FSC to make an effective contribution, which should be incorporated into the current discussion regarding the future of the OSCE.

I would recommend that my successor continue to pay undiminished attention to the work of the FSC. But one delegation alone can achieve little here. Without the sustained support of all of you, we shall hardly succeed in reinvesting the politico-military sphere, as the first dimension of the OSCE, with the importance it deserves.

In that spirit, I wish you every success in the future work of this Forum.