

Address to
the Permanent Council of
the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

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Madame / Mr. Chair,
Distinguished Members of the Permanent Council,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I thank you for this opportunity to address the Permanent Council.

From the perspective of my country, the OSCE is a unique organization. Due to its wide geography, its comprehensive and cross-dimensional approach to security, its over-arching set of norms and principles, as well as its existing mechanisms, the OSCE provides an **unparalleled** platform for political dialogue on European security matters.

I will share Lithuania's views on the ongoing Corfu security dialogue in a few minutes. Please allow me to take a moment to emphasize the OSCE's value as a natural platform for regional and sub-regional co-operation.

As current developments in the Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS) illustrate, this subject is important and relevant for OSCE affairs. Lithuania currently holds the Presidency of the CBSS, which opened its doors in 1992. The brainchild of Uffe Ellemann-Jensen and Hans-Dietrich Genscher, the organization was designed to bridge immense social and economic gaps between the Eastern and Western coasts of the Baltic Sea. 17 years later, as we celebrate the 20th Anniversary of the fall of Berlin wall, in the context of a renewed European security dialogue, let me take this opportunity to share with you the achievements of this regional organization that contribute daily to enhanced co-operative security.

Born as a forum of political dialogue, the CBSS has become a key platform for regional cooperation and currently is turning its attention to strategic economic projects. Through cross-border co-operation, the CBSS links people and ideas. The organization brings together eight EU members along with three non-members. Their political agendas may differ, but at the CBSS they look for synergies and mutual benefit - essential ingredients of co-operative security. The organisation has defined five long-term priorities, in the environment, economic development, energy, education and culture, and finally civil security and the human dimension.

Building on co-operative approaches, the Lithuanian presidency looks to deepening the agenda of the CBSS with issues of mutual interest, such as the security of energy supplies, the development of alternative green resources, climate change, as well as innovations. We seek to fully integrate the transport infrastructure of the Baltic Sea Region into the Trans-European network. Our aim is to expand people-to-people contacts by removing barriers towards a wider

visa free area around the Baltic Sea. Facilitating a rapid increase of trade and investments is another key priority.

The CBSS also provides a natural platform for the development of EU relations with the Russian Federation and Belarus. We regard the Kaliningrad District of Russia and Belarus as inseparable parts of the Baltic Sea regional cooperation. While the Kaliningrad District has been a partner for co-operation with the CBSS, we strongly wish to extend similar cooperative ties with Belarus.

The CBSS does not function in isolation. At the initiative of Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, four regional councils in Northern Europe, namely the CBSS, the Nordic Council of Ministers, the Barents Euro-Arctic Council and the Arctic Council regularly co-ordinate their work. The CBSS coordinates also with other regional organizations, including the Central European Initiative (CEI), the Adriatic Ionian Initiative (AII) and the Black Sea Economic Cooperation. This web of contacts allows different actors to “synchronize watches” and ultimately contribute more effectively to building a European security order. I’ve just discussed the idea of the meeting of the CBSS and the Adriatic Ionian Initiative with Italian Foreign Minister Franco Frattini.

Madam/ Mr. Chair

A number of sub-regional organizations have been created along the former “East-West” divide. With the fall of the Berlin Wall, a crop of institutions and mechanisms grew to address new trans-border interchange. European and Transatlantic integration have also fostered new instruments, such as the Eastern Partnership of the European Union.

Let us recall that the OSCE 1992 Helsinki summit document welcomed ‘regional and sub-regional co-operation’, referring to it as a valuable means of “promoting pluralistic structures of stability... uniting us and promoting comprehensive security” and “an effective form of promoting OSCE principles and objectives as well as implementing and developing OSCE commitments”. Indeed, I am convinced that the OSCE provides a natural platform for regional and sub-regional co-operation and gives us clear normative guidelines for bridge-building between different organizations.

We can do more. I believe that there is a significant potential for the OSCE to support further sub-regional co-operation and to develop practical co-operation between the OSCE and sub-regional institutions on a flexible and case-by-case basis. We can encourage further bilateral or regional initiatives aimed at developing relations of good neighborhood and inter-regional co-operation. The Black Sea area, to name just one, might benefit from such an engagement. Greater regional cooperation in the South Caucasus would still be difficult, but it is a vital part of building long term stability in this volatile region. Central Asian states could also take further efforts at greater regional cooperation in the management of vital resources such as water. The Aral Sea Summit in April this year was a notable event in this regard.

Lithuania is most interested in exploring with other participating States how the OSCE might strengthen co-operation with sub-regional organizations, which are transparent and predictable in their actions; whose members individually and collectively adhere to OSCE principles and commitments; and whose membership is based on open and voluntary commitments. This subject is of particular importance to my country, also in the context of our preparations to the OSCE chairmanship in 2011.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

From the Helsinki Final Act 35 years ago through the Charter of Paris on a New Europe in 1990 to the Charter for European Security signed at the Istanbul Summit, the OSCE has come a long way. The guiding compass of the Organization through a dramatic period of European history has never changed – the foundations of the Organizations' shared values and common commitments.

These **values and commitments** are still meaningful today, because all participating States have pledged to defend them and to respect them in our interaction with each other and in while organizing and developing our own societies.

In this, we **are accountable to each other**. Our performance—whether in consolidating the rule of law and democratic institutions internally or in our behaviour externally -- are the subject of legitimate **peer review** by fellow OSCE states.

In my country's view, this is the essence of the OSCE.

Democratic freedoms, human rights, peaceful settlement of disputes, respect for sovereignty, territorial integrity, political independence of states – these principles are essential for preservation of peace and security and the freedom of states and individuals.

Above all, the OSCE concept of **security as comprehensive and cross-dimensional** remains an indispensable asset that underpins all activities of this Organization across the three dimensions.

The OSCE is a project that requires our constant engagement and will. Given the scope of the challenges that we face today, we cannot afford to be complacent. With other organizations, the OSCE is a vital for fostering common understandings of threats and developing joint responses. The threats are real.

At the top of the list are the **protracted conflicts**.

The war in Georgia underlined dramatically the grave danger that protracted conflicts pose to the security and stability of the OSCE area. The war showed how quickly a situation can spiral out of control. Our assessment should be frank. First, there was a lack of political will to address seriously the protracted conflict. Second, while recently visiting Georgia, I personally witnessed consequences of this military conflict -- namely, thousands of internally displaced persons and grave humanitarian problems. We must draw the right **lessons** and the appropriate **conclusions**. It seems to us that existing OSCE mechanisms of early warning, conflict prevention and crisis management should be improved. But this is not enough: all of us should be ready to use these mechanisms more often, more effectively and as soon as possible. The ultimate goal of the OSCE is to build political will and use all the preventive mechanisms, so as not to have to deal with post-conflict rehabilitation. The tragedy in Georgia can not be repeated.

In this context, I firmly believe that the OSCE **presence in Georgia** should be re-established. We commend the tireless efforts of the Greek Chairmanship in designing status neutral proposals to this end and call upon the parties to show maximum flexibility in this important matter. I also note promising dynamics between the sides to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

The budding momentum should not be wasted in Moldova. Continuous efforts related to confidence building measures will yield definite results for the settlement.

We believe also that **economic and environmental dimension could be more actively utilized** in supporting wider efforts **to settle the protracted conflicts**. Let us be clear: economic rehabilitation and development programmes cannot prevent conflict. But such programmes are vital for tilling the ground for normalisation and eventual reconciliation. I believe that we should take much further the OSCE comprehensive approach to security in addressing still unresolved conflicts and potential flashpoints.

Lithuania believes that matter of energy security might receive more prominence in the OSCE agenda. We welcome the efforts of the Greek Chairmanship this year to enhance the dialogue on the security of energy supplies in the OSCE. This is important. The OSCE is uniquely placed to act as a platform to catalyse innovative international networks, alongside other agencies and organisations, in this vital area.

Challenges arise not only inside Europe today, but increasingly from outside. Trafficking in human beings, weapons and drugs smuggling, the rise of international organised crime and the plague of international terrorism – we face complex threats that pay no respect to borders. The OSCE is active in each of these areas, and can do more. **Afghanistan** brings together many of these threats. The OSCE has started to strengthen **border security** management with Afghanistan's Central Asian neighbours. Let us take this further, working **regionally and with other international partners**.

Lithuania attaches particular importance to the **OSCE Human Dimension**. Human rights and fundamental freedoms, rule of law, democracy building and free elections are core commitments to which all OSCE participating states have—subscribed. However, full implementation of human rights commitments remains a constant challenge. There are negative trends, such as increasing violence against journalists that call for resolute actions from our Organization. Tolerance and non-discrimination is yet another important theme that requires our constant attention.

For my country, it is clear that **fulfilling our common commitments in the human dimension** is a living process. There is no such thing as a perfect democracy, and we should all work hard and strive for steady improvement.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The current security architecture -- organisations, commitments and principles -- has served us well. As a member of the Euro-Atlantic community, Lithuania is open to explore ways to further strengthen and reinvigorate the existing structures, to improve existing instruments and mechanisms. Differing perceptions of security should not preclude the search for common solutions if we remain committed to the shared OSCE values and principles.

Lithuania welcomes **the Corfu dialogue** as launched by the Greek OSCE Chairmanship and will continue to engage constructively. We hope the Corfu Process will help us restore confidence and trust. We believe very strongly that **strengthening of existing OSCE *acquis* and further promoting of implementation of OSCE commitments** should be in the focus of such discussions.

I wish to my appreciation to all of you – the Permanent Representatives of the OSCE participating States - for your dedicated and creative efforts in **advancing the Corfu dialogue here in Vienna**. An open and candid dialogue needs time and patience. We are confident that under the able leadership of the Greek and in-coming Kazakh Chairmanships this dialogue will be instrumental in building new trust between all participating States. In the end, this should strengthen the OSCE *acquis* and help foster genuine comprehensive and co-operative security.

Madame / Mr.Chair,

In conclusion, let me say that Lithuania is keen **to ensure the continuity of efforts** of the Greek chairmanship and those of the incoming Kazakh chairmanship. I am particularly pleased with the strong link established between the two chairmanship teams of Kazakhstan and Lithuania. We are ready to work with the Kazakh Chairman-in-Office on many areas along all three OSCE dimensions as part of Troika next year.

Lithuania will continue to support and actively participate in an **inclusive, transparent and comprehensive** Corfu dialogue. I look forward to productive consultations in this respect with my colleagues in Athens.

We are ready to closely cooperate with the in-coming CiO, the Secretary General and the OSCE institutions in implementing **a well balanced Human dimension agenda**, including the OSCE comprehensive conference on tolerance. We will contribute our share in the important area of transport security as the main theme of the OSCE Economic and environmental dimension.

As we approach the final miles before the Athens Ministerial, I wish strong wind and best sailing to the Greek Chairmanship. We have high confidence in your leadership and you can count on our full support.

Thank you Madame / Mr. Chair