



**Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe**

**The Secretary General**

**Opening Session**

**OSCE Mediterranean Seminar**

**Addressing Threats to Security in the Twenty-First Century: Interaction between  
the OSCE and the Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation**

**18-19 November 2004, Sharm El Sheikh**

Your Excellency, Mr. Shoukry, Assistant Foreign Minister of Egypt,  
Your Excellency, Dr. Passy, Chairman-in-Office and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Bulgaria,  
Your Excellency, Mr. Logar, State Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Slovenia,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you today in Sharm El Sheikh on the occasion of the OSCE Mediterranean Seminar on topics of particular interest and relevance for the OSCE participating States and our Mediterranean Partner States, as well as for the Asian Partner States. I also welcome here representatives of our partner international organizations. The topics that we will discuss - enhanced co-operative security, tolerance and non-discrimination and the challenges of migration - are of common concern to both shores of the Mediterranean.

At the outset, I wish to express my most sincere gratitude to the Government of Egypt for hosting this seminar and for the warm welcome to this beautiful city on the Red Sea which has become synonymous for negotiations for peace and security in the Mediterranean and the Middle East. Special thanks to the team in the Foreign Ministry in Cairo and the Embassy of Egypt in Vienna whose excellent professional support and assistance have immensely contributed to the organization of this event. I wish also to thank the Savoy Hotel for its co-operation.

Egypt is hosting the Seminar for the third time. What can be a better confirmation of the importance that Egypt continuously attaches to our joint work? I am particularly glad to note that after an interruption, this is the second consequent seminar hosted by a Mediterranean

partner State in the region, following the last year's meeting in Aqaba, Jordan. I consider it not only a manifestation of a strong commitment of our partners to our co-operation but a confirmation that in principle we have the same attitude concerning a number of issues of security, and that we share commitments to the values and principles of democracy.

The OSCE, as a pan-European regional arrangement under Chapter VIII of the United Nations Charter, has traditionally attached great importance to dialogue and co-operation with its Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation (MPCs). The maintenance of open channels of communication with the Mediterranean Partners goes back to the very beginning of the Helsinki process.

The OSCE is ready to share its expertise and experience and provide insight into how to address current challenges to security. The OSCE hallmark is its capacity to maintain dialogue on even the most sensitive issue among its participating States. That was the logic for creating the CSCE during the Cold War, and it has served Europe well for the three decades since. The OSCE's concept of comprehensive security is closely linked to the co-operative approach. The key is to work together, achieving security together. One cannot choose one's neighbours. One has to work with them to address issues of common interest and concern.

The OSCE cannot be franchised. We cannot attempt to duplicate what is a unique security organization in other regions. However, some aspects of the work of the OSCE may be applicable to the Mediterranean and the Middle East. This is the thinking of the OSCE and Mediterranean Partner States, that corresponds with the objective and approach of other initiatives, such as the one put forward at the G-8 level this year and endorsed by many in the Mediterranean and other regions.

#### **From Cairo 1995 to Sharm El Sheikh 2004**

This is the tenth OSCE Mediterranean Seminar. In 1995, Egypt hosted the first OSCE Mediterranean Seminar in Cairo (The OSCE experience in confidence-building), marking also the first time that the OSCE and the Partner States met beyond the OSCE area.

Since then, we have come a long way - we have moved from getting to know each other and discussing the OSCE's experiences in confidence-building to deeper interaction. Our relations have become more substantial and we have learned to devote more attention to each other's concerns. Follow up of our work from seminar to seminar has also improved, not least due to the increased input from Partners. Our meeting here today reveals that there is a steadfast commitment to the Mediterranean dialogue.

### **Interactive relations with the Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation**

The Partners have been invited more frequently as observers to Permanent Council meetings, and to more regular meetings of the Mediterranean Contact Group. This year, upon a request by the Mediterranean Partners to promote further relations, side-events were also organized in parallel to OSCE activities, such as, on the margins of the Economic Forum in Prague, to discuss human resource development, and the Human Dimension Implementation Meeting in Warsaw, to discuss the OSCE's election observation experience. Similarly, Parliamentary delegations from the OSCE States and the Mediterranean Partners participated in side-events organized both at the Winter and Annual Sessions of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly.

The OSCE has organized major conferences to promote awareness on tolerance and non-discrimination which are key human dimension commitments. Partner States participated actively in the OSCE Conference on Anti-Semitism (in May in Berlin), the OSCE Meeting on the Relationship between Racist, Xenophobic and anti-Semitic propaganda on the Internet and other hate crimes (in June in Paris) and the OSCE Conference on Tolerance and the Fight against Racism, Xenophobia and Discrimination (in September in Brussels). This year, they also took part in a Technical Experts Conference on Border Management and Security organised by the OSCE and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime as well as the Annual Security Review Conference. In short, partnership is becoming deeper and more meaningful.

### **Promoting co-operative security**

At the OSCE Ministerial Council meeting in Maastricht, the Ministers of Foreign Affairs decided on the OSCE Strategy on Addressing Threats to Security and Stability in the Twenty-first Century which outlines the OSCE's response to contemporary threats and challenges to

security. To render this response more effective and to strengthen the Organization, the OSCE itself is going through a process of reform. The OSCE, *inter alia*, is strengthening its capacity in policing, border management and security, anti-trafficking, counter terrorism, combating all forms of intolerance, and putting a stronger emphasis on a balance among the three dimensions, the political-military, the economic and environmental as well as the human dimensions.

The multifaceted and cross-dimensional nature of the threats of the Twenty-first Century also prompt us to work closer together with our Mediterranean Partners. The Strategy stresses that 'the OSCE will intensify its co-operation with its Mediterranean and Asian Partners for Co-operation, by early identification of areas of common interest and concern and possibilities for further co-ordinated action.' We need to make operational this commitment.

Throughout the course of this year, considerable time and effort has been devoted to seeking further possible avenues of co-operation. The participating States have been tasked to identify additional fields of co-operation and interaction with the Partner States for the purpose of enhancing mutual security, and to encourage them to voluntarily implement OSCE norms, principles and commitments as a means to further interaction with the OSCE. A comprehensive document on partnership is being developed based on all three OSCE dimensions as well as suggestions from both participating and Partner States. This exercise has reinforced our belief in the importance of co-operation with the Partner States. Since the last Mediterranean Seminar that took place in Aqaba, quite a few developments have taken place.

Any work on a way forward must and indeed is taking into consideration the needs and aspirations of the Mediterranean Partners. In an inter-dependent world, Europe - however, you define it - borders the Mediterranean and the destiny of its northern shores is linked to the destiny of its southern coast. Co-operation with the Mediterranean Partners could be increasingly complemented by new activities on broader issues of common concern. We value our dialogue and relations with our Mediterranean Partners. We value the reciprocity in our co-operation. It is only in working together that we can find ways to solve these challenges together and contribute to peace and security.

In the future, we should also strive to make discussions at a meeting like this even more interactive. We can do better than limit participation in our seminars to diplomats and a few experts. We should consider broader involvement in our dialogue of a broad range of academic experts, the media and civil society representatives, and NGOs, at least from the host country and better from the Mediterranean partner States as well as from the OSCE participating States.

Discussions at the informal group of friends chaired by the Ambassador Härkönen of Finland have revealed a strong interest in the need for consolidating the partnership with Partner States. This new impetus is to be substantiated in a report on practical ways to enhance future relations, that will be presented to the Ministerial Council meeting on 6-7 December in Sofia. On the eve, a Ministerial Troika meeting will take place with counterparts from the Mediterranean Partners. I look forward to the outcome of the Sofia Ministerial.

We also should not miss this excellent opportunity of the Sharm El Sheikh Seminar to consider the enhancement of the Mediterranean dialogue and relations with the MPCs. The Maastricht Ministerial Council's decisions on enhancing our joint work with our Mediterranean and Asian Partners for Co-operation proved themselves well in the past period. We should not stop and remain satisfied with this progress. On the contrary, this Seminar should provide an additional impetus to opening the OSCE farther up to even more enhanced co-operation with our partners, with others who might wish to benefit from it.

Thank you for your attention.