



Vienna, 29 October 2009

**Address by the Chairman-in-Office of the OSCE, Prime Minister and  
Minister for Foreign Affairs of Greece, H.E. Mr George Papandreou,  
to the OSCE Permanent Council**

Ladies and gentlemen,

I address the OSCE Permanent Council in my capacity as Chairman in Office for the first time. Unfortunately, I cannot be with all of you today in Vienna and attend this session in person, yet I did not want to miss the opportunity to share with you a few thoughts, both about the organization which my country has the pleasure and honor to chair this year, as well as my vision for the Athens Ministerial Council in December.

The OSCE principles and values form the basis of Greece's overall foreign policy: respect for international law and fundamental freedoms, the rules of multilateral diplomacy, open dialogue, cooperation and inclusiveness.

The OSCE concept of indivisible, comprehensive and cooperative security - a security which begins with the protection of the inherent dignity of each and every individual.

The OSCE encompasses the vast area between Vancouver and Vladivostok, and this coincides with Greece's strategic perception for a wider Europe of freedom and peace.

During its OSCE Chairmanship, Greece has been acting as honest broker. Our efforts have been to build consensus and safeguard the organization's principles and norms. In the same spirit, we strive towards achieving the broader possible consensus, in the adoption of decisions at the Athens Ministerial Council. Our efforts are to solve, and not to exploit problems.

After years of Cold War strategic impasse, the resilience of the post-Cold War security system in the OSCE area has been tested by regional conflicts, ethnic tensions, border disputes, which have threatened to deteriorate into open crises.

The OSCE strategic calls for peace and stability, such as the CFE Treaty, remain in deadlock. Energy security, organized crime, illegal migration, human trafficking, terrorism, absolutism and fundamentalism, as well as cybercrime, are challenges for all of us of acute concern.

Our will to confront them cannot be contested. After all, OSCE itself managed not only to survive post-Cold War reverberations, but the OSCE actively alleviated tensions and mistrust that threatened peace, prosperity and regional stability.

Irrespective of the diverging views on the root causes of tensions, we need to break the deadlock of mistrust. We must do so by invigorating cooperation and solidarity. And we must do so because instability between our neighboring states, and thus security in Europe, is closely interlinked with the security in our neighboring regions.

The security and the safeguarding of human dignity is the foundation of the OSCE's basic principle of indivisible security. Our cooperation on these principles covers all, the purely military as well as the economic, environmental and human dimensions. Indeed, OSCE values seek to negate Clausewitz's doctrine of war as the continuation of politics.

The Greek Chairmanship, through its initiatives and achieved results, has proved my country's commitment to those values encapsulated in the Corfu Process, our most important collective achievement, on the basis of a consensus on a number of fundamental realities:

*First*, that the changes rooted in Europe after the end of the Cold War are irreversible.

*Second*, that there cannot be lasting peace in the OSCE region as long as we continue to view our relations through a zero-sum lens. Our wins should be victories for all; one's losses should be a loss for the many. This is the solidarity we need to achieve.

*Third*, despite the tremendous progress towards a Europe free, whole and in peace, its full implementation, implementation as enshrined in the Paris Charter, still remains elusive. We have to work together towards the convergence of different strategic perceptions, and restore confidence and trust.

*Fourth*, this climate of mistrust and tension, increased among OSCE participating States by partial or selective implementation of the Helsinki Final Act principles, clouded relations amongst our partners and clearly now inhibits our sense of solidarity and shared responsibility. And we need this sense of shared responsibility and solidarity, in order to address the new security threats of the twenty-first century.

*Last* but not least, we all recognize that our organization, thanks to its broad membership, its legacy, its comprehensive security concept, provides unique advantages, advantages for a wide-ranging strategic and inclusive dialogue on the present and future challenges and prospects of European security.

Yet, it should be noted that the quintessence of our efforts is the political will to preserve a cooperative and indivisible security in wider Europe. And thus it is especially encouraging that all participating states have embraced this process, as evident by the record of the weekly Corfu Process Ambassadorial Meetings in Vienna.

In this respect, I would like to pay tribute to the Presidents of Russia and France for their initiatives, and acknowledge the boost this fundamentally multilateral process has received by the "reset button" policy of the new Obama administration, as enunciated by Secretary of State Ms. Hillary Rodham Clinton.

Ladies and gentlemen, protracted conflicts have stubbornly plagued the OSCE area for decades now. We know that they are potential sources of discord, and we cannot afford to leave them on the back burner. The war in Georgia has proven this point.

Perceptions might shape strategic doctrines, but realities on the ground are shaping people's lives. For the populations affected, irrespective of their national origin, the concept of cooperative and indivisible security has no practical value. They all need peace and stability, not a fragile status quo.

After the 2008 August war in Georgia, the situation has clearly required more, not less, OSCE co-operation and presence. The Greek Chairmanship has spared no effort in searching for ways to ensure that the OSCE remains engaged in Georgia, especially in the conflict-affected areas. And we will continue to keep trying.

At this stage, I would also like to pay tribute to the three Co-Chairs of the Minsk Group, as well as to my personal representative for the conflict dealt with by the Minsk Group Ambassador Andrzej Kasprzyk. I would like to pay tribute to their tireless efforts to find a mutually acceptable solution to the Nagorno-Karabakh issue. We are encouraged by the positive momentum that the recent frequent meetings of the presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan have created, and I will lend my personal support to the Co-Chairs of the parties, in their quest to achieve a long-lasting peace in the South-Caucasus region.

My special appreciation goes also to the moderators and observers of the three-plus-two negotiation scheme for Transnistria. My special representative, Ambassador Christopoulos, and the head of the OSCE Mission in Moldova, Ambassador Remler, are doing a fabulous job, a job which is very important, and I'd like to commend their efforts to build confidence between the different parties.

At this point, allow me to express my deep appreciation for the invaluable work of all special representatives, as well as my personal representatives.

Dear Ambassadors, after a long dry spell, the OSCE family of nations needs now, more than ever, to celebrate, and do so together, the resolution of the protracted conflicts, and do so in order to send the message to other conflict regions in the world that effective diplomacy can resolve disputes peacefully.

In a globalized world system, the lines between hard and soft security are blurred. Diplomacy has both to do with people, as it also has to do with how we use the powers each and every one of us may have. The powers we wield today, as humanity, nations or individuals, should make us all the more responsible to resolving the challenges in a humane and a just way.

We are still vulnerable to threats from weapons of mass destruction. We are also vulnerable to the consequences of the global economic crisis, the environmental degradation and climate change, and indeed the main goal of the Greek chairmanship is the promotion of a more environmentally friendly organization, with the idea of greening the OSCE, with a new generation of environmental projects, with the development also of green diplomacy.

Climate change, in the end, could fully overshadow all the region's conflicts, all the regional conflicts we are dealing with and we face today.

And if, as I said earlier, security lies on the premise of protecting the inherent dignity of each and every individual, then violation of human rights and fundamental freedoms constitutes a security threat for all of us.

It is in our hands to prove that the prospect of lasting peace and prosperity in the OSCE area is not an academic exercise of our times, but a tangible goal to be obtained through cooperation and joint effort for the mutual benefit of our states and our peoples.

I firmly believe that co-operation will redeem the humankind, as Bertrand Russell has said.

With these thoughts and in this spirit, I invite you all to join our efforts in order to transform this historic opportunity into a common success.

I am also looking forward to welcoming you all to Athens in December, where we can make a fresh start and revitalize the spirit of Helsinki.

Thank you for your attention.