

***Address by Mr Andrej Logar***  
***State Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Slovenia***

***2004 OSCE Mediterranean Seminar***  
***on Addressing Threats to Security in the Twenty-first Century:***  
***Interaction between the OSCE and the Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation***  
***Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt, 18 November 2004***

Mr Chairman,

Your Excellency, the Assistant Foreign Minister of the Arab Republic of Egypt,  
Mr. Sameh Shoukry

Your Excellency, Foreign Minister of Bulgaria, CiO of the OSCE, Dr. Solomon Passy

Your Excellency the Secretary General of the OSCE Ján Kubiš,

Distinguished participants,

Let me start by saying how honoured I am to have the opportunity to address the 2004 OSCE Mediterranean Seminar on behalf of the incoming Chairmanship of the OSCE.

I would like to express my deepest appreciation to the government of Egypt for kindly hosting this year's Mediterranean Seminar. I could not stress enough the importance of the fact that yet again the seminar is taking place in a OSCE Mediterranean partner country. This should provide the additional impetus for the success of the seminar.

The topic of this year's OSCE Mediterranean Seminar is well chosen. The issue of threats to security in the twenty-first century is both the subject of numerous discussions and concrete operational activities. In our inter-dependent world, the threats are very similar for all States bordering the Mediterranean. Therefore it is very timely to discuss the issue in the context of interaction between the OSCE and its Mediterranean Partners. The key task is to determine which threats we have in common, and how to respond – jointly if possible.

Today's and tomorrow's discussions, as well as the opportunity this meeting provides to meet and share experiences should allow for greater mutual understanding and improve the possibility for practical co-operation.

Slovenia's approach to joint activities with the Mediterranean Partners has been based on the belief that through openness and dialogue, as well as identifying specific areas for co-operation, we will be able to have a mutually enriching exchange and a forward-looking partnership. This is an approach that we intend to continue during our Chairmanship of the OSCE in 2005. We therefore see this seminar as part of a process that we intend to build on next year.

One of the OSCE's key roles as a catalyst and match-maker, using its wide networks of contacts, expertise and capabilities can be a useful source of inspiration to neighbouring regions including the Mediterranean. A well-recognised asset of the OSCE is its co-operative approach to international security including a wide range of confidence and security building measures. Another recent but distinguished feature is the OSCE Strategy to Address Threats to Security and Stability in the 21st Century. Existing OSCE's mechanisms could strengthen security and co-operation, not only between the participating and partner States, but also between partner States themselves.

The issue of tolerance is especially relevant for the relationship between OSCE and the Mediterranean partners. The Mediterranean region being on the crossroads of civilisations, cultures and religions should use its comparative advantage in finding strategies for pursuing more mutual respect and understanding.

Mr. Chairman,

I believe that we should use this seminar as an opportunity for discussing migration since it is a growing challenge to the OSCE as well as the Mediterranean region in all directions, along the north-south as well as the east-west axes. Excessive migration pressure is a process in which everybody loses. The countries of origin suffer a "brain drain" and diminished human capital, while the countries of destination are presented with the challenge of integrating a massive influx of immigrants, frequently in their turn having to face rising unemployment. In general, migratory flows are not being effectively managed and illegal migration appears to be increasing rather than decreasing.

The OSCE can raise awareness of threats and recommend means to mitigate them. The OSCE could contribute to more positive perception of migration flows, and could assist in

setting up solidarity instruments in the areas of migration, supporting a pro-active approach to integration of immigrants in countries of destination. On the other hand OSCE should remain an important advocate for improving economic and security prospects of populations in countries of origin, within the OSCE as well as in the Mediterranean region, in order to contribute to more balanced migration flows.

This thinking was the rationale behind the decision to devote next year's OSCE Economic Forum to the topic "Demographic Trends, Migration and Integrating Persons Belonging to National Minorities: Ensuring Security and Sustainable Development in the OSCE area". It is also why we have identified »migration and integration« as the central theme of our Chairmanship. This is a topic of equal concern East and West of Vienna and, insofar as migration flows in part stem also from the Mediterranean region, of direct relevance to our dialogue with OSCE's Mediterranean partners.

Your excellencies, ladies and gentlemen

Let me conclude by wishing you a very fruitful meeting here in Sharm El Sheikh. I am confident that it will, by providing us with concrete results, greatly help us in formulating our policies at the Sofia Ministerial Council and further during Slovenian OSCE Chairmanship in 2005.

I thank you.