



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

**Statement by the OSCE Secretary General, Ambassador Ján Kubiš  
at the Annual Meeting of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Member States  
of the Central European Initiative**

*Portoroz, 25 May 2004*

Mr. Chairman, Minister Rupel,  
Your Excellencies,

It is an honour to participate in and address this annual meeting of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Member States of the Central European Initiative (CEI) 2004, together with the Bulgarian Chairmanship of the OSCE – member of the CEI. I am grateful for the invitation and for the hospitality extended by the Slovenian Government.

Being the largest security organization in Europe, the OSCE pays much attention to the development of regional and subregional processes within the OSCE area and to co-operation with them. As emphasized in the OSCE Strategy to Address Threats to Security and Stability in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century adopted at the Maastricht Ministerial last December (and earlier in the Platform for Co-operative Security), “the OSCE is a forum for co-operation with subregional organizations in its area.”

The OSCE sees regional and subregional organizations and initiatives as essential contributors to co-operation and security in the OSCE area. Regional and subregional cooperation enhances good-neighbourly relations, promotes confidence building, and facilitates regional development.

We at the OSCE welcome the CEI's considerable contribution to promoting economic, social and civil development of the CEI Member States and to strengthening their participation in the process of European integration. Taking advantage of this opportunity, I would like to congratulate five CEI Members – the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Slovenia, and Slovakia – with joining the European Union on 1 May, and to credit the CEI for assisting these countries in achieving their goal of attaining EU membership and for contributing to the creation of a united and democratic Europe. Solidarity is a strong enabler and a driving force and I am glad to hear that the CEI members pledge further and increased support to each other in *inter alia* reaching objectives with regard to European and Euro-Atlantic integration.

The OSCE, through its co-operation with its participating States - the CEI member states as well as with the CEI as such, works in synergy with these objectives. Indeed, OSCE values, principles and commitments and their full implementation by the CEI countries only strengthens them and reinforces their democratic credentials, thus creating better conditions vis-à-vis European integration. I therefore urge you to continue your active engagement with the OSCE – on bilateral and regional levels – and use the potential of this partner co-operation to the fullest.

Strengthening Europe's security and co-operation remains at the heart of the OSCE. This year, under the Chairmanship of Bulgaria, the OSCE continues its comprehensive, but very practical work aimed at preventing and addressing threats to security in its area of responsibility, thus implementing *inter alia* the objectives of the strategy for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. This includes the Organization's ceaseless efforts in counter-terrorism and in policing. It is in fact in the region of CEI, where the OSCE has trained police and has built up much of its expertise in community policing, in particular in multi-ethnic societies.

Increasingly, the OSCE is paying greater attention to enhancing border management and security, as well as to fighting trafficking, particularly trafficking in human beings. As we all want borders in Europe to become more open and easy for travel and trade, we at the same time must take proper action to prevent the abuse of this openness by traffickers of people, weapons and drugs. The Second Annual Security Review Conference to be convened in Vienna in June will further review this and other security work undertaken by the OSCE and its participating States.

From its inception almost thirty years ago, the OSCE's strength and unique contribution to European security have been based on the notion of a comprehensive approach to security. It is in this spirit that the OSCE explores ways to enhance its work in the economic and environmental, and human dimensions. Relevant decisions, notably the OSCE Strategy Document for the Economic and Environmental Dimension and the Decision on Tolerance and Non-Discrimination, were also adopted by the Maastricht Ministerial and are being implemented.

In doing its work and in order to perform its role most efficiently, the OSCE actively seeks to expand its relations with all organizations and institutions that are concerned with the promotion of comprehensive security within the OSCE area, first of all with its key partners in the region – the EU, NATO, the Council of Europe and the UN – as well as with all regional initiatives and groupings, not least because they are based on strong regional ownership of and commitment to their work and activities.

In this regard, I am glad to note close co-operation that has developed between the OSCE and the CEI. This is not surprising, given that the OSCE and CEI share the same values and principles, while the CEI Member States account for almost the third of the OSCE participating States.

There is, however, further potential for enhancing OSCE-CEI co-operation. CEI's strategic objective to "work for cohesion of a united Europe, without dividing lines, a Europe with shared values, embracing all countries, regions, peoples and citizens of the continent" is very much in line with the OSCE's vision and mandate. The intention of the CEI Slovenian Presidency to shift CEI's focus of activity towards the European East and South-East, where the OSCE has many of its field activities, creates a natural ground for OSCE-CEI co-operation. Many of the issues related to economic, human and institutional development which are included in the CEI Plan of Action 2004-2006, stand high on the OSCE's agenda too. In addition, both the OSCE and the CEI gradually engage in specific project and programme activities. I also noted with satisfaction the conclusion of the CEI Summit in Warsaw in November 2003 that an intensified co-operation with the OSCE (together with the European Union and the Council of Europe) is of "paramount importance" for the CEI.

Mr. Chairman,

It might be symbolic that Slovenia, which holds the CEI Presidency this year, will become the OSCE Chairman-in-Office in 2004 and that the current OSCE Chairmanship-in-Office, Bulgaria, is a CEI member. We should try to translate this advantage and potential more vigorously into concrete and specific co-operation activities, to shape the future of OSCE-CEI co-operation.

I am confident that the ongoing dialogue and co-operation between the OSCE and CEI will continue to be enhanced in the future, contributing to the strengthening of security and stability across the OSCE area.