

PC.DEL/27/13
24 January 2013

ENGLISH
Original: GERMAN

**STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR RÜDIGER LÜDEKING,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF
GERMANY TO THE OSCE, AT THE 938th MEETING OF THE OSCE
PERMANENT COUNCIL**

24 January 2013

Mr. Chairperson,

Ambassador Alabrune has explained in detail the historic status and significance of the Élysée Treaty for our countries Germany and France. I should like to add a few comments on aspects that I believe are also of relevance to our work in Vienna.

For my generation, Franco-German friendship is part of our national and European identity. Yet it is not a matter of course. For my parents' generation, who personally experienced the horrors of the Second World War, the Élysée Treaty marked a new start, an abandonment of the popular idea at the time of a long-standing irresolvable rivalry and "hereditary enmity" between the two countries. The Treaty is a symbol of the path of reconciliation embarked on after the Second World War aiming at the building of a united Europe that has opened up to the people lasting prospects for peace, security, solidarity, prosperity, freedom and the rule of law.

The OSCE is also a symbol of a historic change. After the CSCE had been instrumental in overcoming East-West confrontation, the OSCE was to herald a new era after the Cold War of democracy, peace and unity. Its aim remains that of creating a common security area from Vancouver to Vladivostok in which every individual and every community can live in peace, prosperity and security. In the Charter of Paris the OSCE participating States committed themselves to the same values and goals as Germany and France set in the Élysée Treaty. At the centre are reconciliation, confidence-building and partnership. This is the unchanged core of the OSCE's mandate.

Mr. Chairperson,

Reconciliation and friendship cannot be ordained from above but are rather the result of an ongoing process. This process proceeds gradually, and those involved are required again and again to confront new challenges. This applies to the Franco-German relationship, which at present has to deal, for example, with overcoming the debt crisis together. It also applies to the OSCE, in which we have to confront the tensions in East-West relations that have grown in recent times. This is an area in which there is a need for greater action by the OSCE.

At the same time, progress in the resolution of ongoing regional conflicts in the OSCE area is overdue. We cannot accept the current blockade. Talk of the particular complexity and difficulty of the various conflict situations does not hold up. Reconciliation is a process that is often bilateral, but the OSCE is able to offer a multilateral framework here that facilitates conflict resolution. There is a need, however, for political will by the conflicting parties and a determination to achieve reconciliation; there is a need for an awareness of the fundamental shared interests that exist beyond the conflict, for sensitivity and mutual respect. This has all been demonstrated already in exemplary fashion in the Franco-German reconciliation process.

Mr. Chairperson,

The example of France and Germany has also shown that reconciliation and the building of confidence and friendship are not just a matter for the political elites. It is not a question of reconciliation between individuals but between peoples. During his historic visit to Germany in 1962, President de Gaulle therefore made a point of speaking on several occasions to the German people. His speech to young Germans on 9 September 1962 in Ludwigsburg, which François Alabrune quoted, is famous. In this light, I ask myself whether we in the OSCE are doing enough to take our discussions beyond the narrow confines of the Permanent Council and involving the people in our countries in our work. I therefore consider the widest possible participation and inclusion of civil society as indispensable and also capable of development.

As de Gaulle's speech in Ludwigsburg also impressively illustrated, young people have always been deserving of particular attention in the development and intensification of Franco-German friendship. In their joint declaration on the 50th anniversary of the Élysée Treaty, foreign ministers Fabius and Westerwelle described youth as "the key to a common future". I believe we should also give thought to how we can interest the young people in our countries in the OSCE and involve them more. Unfortunately, the public and especially young people know much too little in general about the work of the OSCE.

Mr. Chairperson,

I should like to say something about what I consider to be a central aspect. The precise title of the Élysée Treaty is "Treaty on Franco-German co-operation". The OSCE also has the word "co-operation" in its name. Put simply, in both cases it is a question of being not "against each other" but "with each other". Co-operation is not conditional, however, on identical or aligned interests and positions. In the relationship between France and Germany there are still differences of opinion even today in some cases on fundamental questions. The two countries have opposing attitudes regarding the use of nuclear energy, to mention just one example. At no time have these differences of opinion been an obstacle to close co-operation between France and Germany and the search for workable compromises. On the contrary, it has even encouraged both States to do so. They have been guided by shared basic convictions, a pronounced sense of responsibility and the awareness of fundamental interests that can be achieved only "with each other". Ultimately the same is true of the CSCE and OSCE. The willingness of the participating States to work together beyond existing differences and to seek a compromise was the condition for the success in peacefully overcoming the East-West confrontation. It is only in this way as well that the Helsinki+40 process adopted in Dublin can be successfully concluded.

Jean Monnet, one of the fathers of European unity, once said “*Rien n’est possible sans les hommes, rien n’est durable sans les institutions*” – nothing is possible without people, nothing is durable with institutions. In relation to the OSCE this means on the one hand that we need the leadership, commitment and unwavering will to work together by all concerned. On the other hand, the OSCE offers us a framework in which we can anchor the results of our work on a permanent basis. The preservation of the OSCE as the “keeper of the Grail” of our common interests, values and agreements must therefore be the object of our particular attention and our particular care.

Mr. Chairperson,

I should like to conclude by mentioning one further aspect. The Élysée Treaty and the associated process of Franco-German reconciliation and co-operation are often singled out as an example and model. The OSCE is also a model of the co-operative shaping of international relations. It is not only the largest but also by far the most developed regional organization within the United Nations. The *acquis* it has elaborated is of central significance for shaping co-operative security relations and safeguarding lasting security and stability. The arms control instruments it has elaborated, for example, are a unique achievement that may be taken as an example and orientation for other world regions. We should do everything possible to preserve this *acquis* and adapt it where necessary to changing conditions. With this *acquis* the OSCE participating States are well positioned and equipped for a future in peace and security. We should not jeopardize this under any circumstances. The OSCE’s fundamental documents, from the CSCE Final Act and Charter of Paris to the Astana Summit declaration, continue to show us the way today.

Mr. Chairperson,

Anniversaries like the 50th anniversary of the signing of the Élysée Treaty are occasions for celebration, but they are also occasions for reviewing what has been achieved and what has been neglected. And they are occasions for looking ahead. The Élysée Treaty was a historic windfall. Franco-German friendship is a constant and permanent feature of the lives of our two peoples.

The OSCE can also look back on a uniquely successful history. We complain about the crisis that the Organization currently finds itself in, but at the same time we should not forget the value and importance of the OSCE for the security of all of us. In 2015 we will celebrate a major anniversary, the 40th anniversary of the signing of the CSCE Final Act. It offers an opportunity for restructuring the OSCE and arming it for the challenges that in a globalized world we can only confront together on the basis of shared values.

Thank you.