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## Expert Meeting on a European Security Dialogue

Speaking Points  
Chair of the Permanent Council  
Ambassador Mara Marinaki

May 8<sup>th</sup> 2009  
Palais Niederösterreich, Vienna

Your Excellency Minister Spindelegger,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a pleasure to be here as the representative of the Greek Chairmanship and I wish to thank Minister Spindelegger for the invitation to address such an esteemed audience, and also for this very timely initiative of the Austrian Ministry of European and International Affairs. OSCE participating States need precisely this kind of discussion.

We need this because the vision of a 'Europe whole and free, and at peace with itself,' which has always been at the heart of the CSCE and the OSCE, remains a goal rather than a reality. We are not there yet. Hard work lies still ahead to achieve the goals of common and indivisible security across all parts of the OSCE space.

Dialogue and constant debate are vital parts of this process - to reaffirm the principles of indivisible security, to recommit ourselves to a comprehensive, multi-dimensional approach to security, and to take stock of existing commitments, instruments and institutions.

From this perspective, the question of European security is one that can never be fully and finally answered. It needs to be raised again and again, as times change and new challenges arise.

We gather here today because the question has been posed again. Almost one year ago, the Russian President proposed a pan-European summit that would frame negotiations on a legally-binding 'European Security Treaty.' The spirit of this proposal is a call for renewed dialogue on the security of wider Europe. This spirit has been accepted by many other leaders in the OSCE community.

Minister,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

This process has already started, and it has started where such a discussion belongs - in the OSCE. Officials are aware of this, but the expert community may not be. So please allow me to highlight the exploratory steps that have been taken thus far.

On December 4<sup>th</sup>, the first day of the 16<sup>th</sup> OSCE Ministerial Council in Helsinki, the Finnish Chairman-in-Office Foreign Minister Alexander Stubb organized a Working Lunch, which saw the first high-level, multilateral discussion of the future of European security. The debate, attended by 52 OSCE Ministers was lively and thought-provoking.

Minister Stubb drew several conclusions from this first exploratory discussion, which has served to guide our subsequent efforts. First, and most importantly, that the OSCE is the right place for taking forward renewed discussions. The comprehensive approach of the Organization, which includes human rights and fundamental freedoms and sound economic and environmental governance, as well as politico-military co-operation, remains an unparalleled *acquis* -- especially when combined with the inclusive composition of an Organization that stretches across most of the Northern hemisphere.

All OSCE Ministers agreed in Helsinki that our starting point should be the founding principles of the Helsinki process. The comprehensive concept of security, with 'hard' and 'soft' security viewed as inextricably linked, and with the security of all members of the OSCE community viewed as indivisible, should be our point of departure.

In taking forward the call for renewed dialogue, Ministers agreed that the focus should fall on substance rather than form. And certainly, questions of substance abound, from the future of conventional arms control in the Euro-Atlantic area and efforts to solve the protracted conflicts that continue to cast a cloud over our security, to the need to keep the momentum of democratic transformation across the region. Since the end of the Second World War, members of the OSCE area have developed a dense network of security institutions, bolstered by a rich body of commitments. Carrying forward a broad strategic discussion in the OSCE should not diminish the role of these institutions. Indeed, these can and should be built on and consolidated.

As Minister Stubb then concluded, the discussion in Helsinki showed that there are still more questions than answers - questions about the scope of our dialogue, about its pace, and about how the different actors should participate.

The Greek Chairmanship has built on this foundation. Since Helsinki, discussions have continued in OSCE bodies - in the framework of the OSCE Permanent Council and Forum for Security Co-operation and during the Winter Meeting of the Parliamentary Assembly.

On April 24-25, we organised an OSCE Ambassadors' Retreat on the 'Future of European Security and the Role of the OSCE.' I am pleased to take this opportunity to thank once more the Austrian Foreign Ministry for its generous support to this event.

The event was important, because it will help us to give structure to what so far has been an exploratory conceptual discussion, to propel the dialogue towards an informal meeting of OSCE Foreign Ministers, which was initiated by the Greek CIO Foreign Minister H.E. Dora Bakoyannis and is planned to take place on 27-28 June in Corfu, and further down the road towards the Athens Ministerial Council meeting in December.

During the Ambassadors' Retreat, the OSCE participating States reaffirmed their conviction that the OSCE is the right forum for carrying this debate forward -- due to its inclusiveness, its comprehensive security concept and its long experience.

The Permanent Representatives to the OSCE also agreed that challenges remain in all three dimensions - including the need to settle protracted conflicts, to revitalize arms control and CSBM regimes, to deepen co-operation in addressing threats arising from outside the OSCE area and new threats (such as cybercrime), to address economic and environmental challenges (including energy and water), to ensure respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms and to counter intolerance and discrimination.

The OSCE is the obvious place to anchor an open-ended dialogue on these issues. On many of them, it can serve as a toolbox and a negotiating forum to address challenges directly. On others (such as the impact of the global economic and financial crisis), other organizations might take the lead, but the OSCE can still serve as a clearinghouse, promoting awareness of and support for other international efforts.

In seeking to bridge our differences and to address remaining issues, the OSCE Permanent Representatives agreed that the dialogue should build on existing agreements -- including the Helsinki Final Act (1975), the Charter of Paris for a New Europe (1990), the Code of Conduct for Politico-Military Security (1994) and the Charter for European Security, including the Platform for Co-operative Security (1999). Our goal should be a "Helsinki Plus" rather than a "Helsinki II" concept. The objective, indeed, should be to strengthen our existing *acquis*, rather than trying to replace it.

Of course, OSCE participating States are keenly aware that principles, commitments and mechanisms, including those developed within the OSCE framework, are only useful, if they are *implemented by all* OSCE participating States.

For this reason, discussions on European security cannot remain abstract. Failure to agree on the future of the OSCE presence in Georgia, for example, could call into question our commitment to seeing our shared principles in action. Resolving such concrete issues, on the other hand, would signal a serious approach from all participating States and allow us to widen the scope of our discussions on European Security.

We agreed to not pre-judge the outcome of our dialogue, but rather to approach honestly and self-critically the question of how we can do more to ensure the consistent implementation of existing commitments in all three dimensions and - perhaps most importantly - to restore trust among the OSCE's participating States.

In all, therefore, the Ambassadors' Retreat took the dialogue a few important steps further.

The forthcoming OSCE Informal Ministerial Meeting in Corfu (27-28 June 2009) will be another important next step. The informal meeting will offer an excellent opportunity to OSCE Foreign Ministers to provide the strong political input that is needed in order to drive this process forward -- to clarify priorities related to the future of European Security and to launch a process that can be further streamlined through a decision [or a series of decisions] to be adopted at the Athens Ministerial Council (December 2009).

Minister,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

2008 was a challenging year, and 2009 holds no promise of being any easier. Tensions remain in parts of the OSCE areas, while reliable legal instruments for military transparency and arms control continue to erode.

In this context, the call for renewed dialogue is an opportunity that we cannot afford to miss. The challenges that OSCE participating States and societies face are deep, but they are not insurmountable.

In taking the dialogue forward, we must remember that bridging differences takes time. When the Heads of State and Government of the CSCE met in Helsinki in 1975, the participating States had held more than 2400 meetings in Geneva, and deliberated on 4,660 proposals. So we may be at the beginning of what may be a long and arduous process. Yet the progress we have made and the *acquis* we have developed in the intervening years should give us a solid head start. Let's try to optimize the existing structures to use them as starting blocks for our marathon debates - I look forward to our discussions today.

Bringing together experts and officials to explore the principle and reality of the indivisibility of security, as well as current security challenges in the OSCE area, and means to strengthen existing institutions and find new solutions, - this is as important for the dialogue on European security as are the formal exchanges of views between Ambassadors and Ministers.

We need the input and the ideas of the expert community to enrich our debate. This is a plea for your support and your imagination.

Thank you.