



OSCE CHIEFS OF POLICE MEETING

Opening statement by Special Envoy
PIERRE CHEVALIER,
Belgian 2006 OSCE Chairmanship

Brussels, 24 November 2006

Mr Deputy Prime Minister,
Ministers, Excellencies,
Generals, Commissioner-generals and Heads of Police Services,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have the honour and the pleasure of welcoming you to the first meeting of Chiefs of Police from participating States and partner countries from the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. I am really pleased to see that more than 50 countries have responded to our invitation: the number, range and quality of participants and speakers gathered here today is evidence of our collective determination to tackle the curse of organized crime.

At the outset, I would like to thank our co-organizers, the Belgian Federal Police, represented here at the highest level by Minister of the Interior Patrick Dewael and Commissioner-general of the federal police Herman Fransen, as well as the Strategic Police Matters Unit



of the OSCE, for their support and excellent cooperation throughout the year.

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen

The policing of our societies does not stop at our national borders. Organized crime networks are very efficient at exploiting our global economies and open societies. By commanding vast wealth, crime groups can wield considerable power, threatening the safety and security of citizens and undermining the democratic values in our societies. From a global perspective, as the UN Summit of Heads of State and Government emphasized in September 2005, organized crime is a threat to peace, stability and security.

There is thus ample reason for a security organisation as the OSCE to put combating organized crime high on its agenda. As early as 1999, the OSCE Summit in Istanbul decided, and I quote, “to step up the OSCE’s work to combat organized crime and to enhance the OSCE’s role in civilian police-related activities as an integral part of the Organization’s efforts in conflict prevention, crisis management and post-conflict rehabilitation”.



What this declaration reflects is the awareness, at the highest level, of the fact that organized crime does not only flourish as a result of instability, but also contributes and leads to instability. These, indeed, are the reasons why Belgium has made combating organized crime a priority of its OSCE Chairmanship this year.

That year is now almost over and the question “what have you done?” is a legitimate one. In an opening statement, I do not have the time to refer to the many initiatives that we have taken, but let me give you a brief overview of the main lines and some of the results of our sustained focus this year.

Efficient and effective criminal justice systems are key in upholding public safety and security. A major, perhaps the major point of attention has been the emphasis on criminal justice systems. The principal idea was to take a comprehensive view, from “investigation to incarceration”. Policies and activities on the criminal justice system need to focus on the different elements of the chain: crime prevention, law enforcement, the judicial system, prosecution, defense lawyers and penal systems. At the upcoming OSCE Ministerial Council meeting, in Brussels in just 10 days, we will launch a set of assessment toolkits on criminal justice systems, developed by the UNODC in close cooperation with the OSCE and the Belgian Chairmanship. The policing part of this tool covers public safety and



police service delivery, crime investigation, integrity and accountability and police information and intelligence.

The legal framework that provides the basis for our joint action, in particular the UN Convention on Transnational Organized Crime or Palermo Convention, has been a second point of attention. 45 participating States have ratified this Convention. 10 have signed but ratification is still pending. As the emphasis is shifting to implementation, we have focused this year on improving the reporting cycle of State Parties. Today a report on the Organization's contribution to improve ratification and implementation is being distributed to participating States in Vienna.

Risk and threat analyses have been a third priority. Tools to objectively analyze the threats, to move from information to knowledge, and to use this knowledge as a basis for policy-making are of crucial importance. We implemented a successful pilot project in Kyrgyzstan in September. You will hear more about this in session I of the conference.

This meeting certainly is the main element in our initiatives to contribute to international law enforcement cooperation, a fourth line of action. We can talk about organized crime as much as we want, but at the end of the day it is the professionals, that is, you, that need



to be given the support and the means to work together across our national borders. It is the professionals that need to exchange information, push investigations, extradite suspects, bring them to justice, that need to be able to rely on the full co-operation and readiness of colleagues and judicial structures in all countries concerned. By addressing some of the more difficult topics, such as data protection, we intend to contribute to that. The launch of the Policing Online Information System later this afternoon, a project supported by Belgium, is another step towards that objective.

That being said, it is not our goal to turn the OSCE into an organization for operational police cooperation: other organizations - Interpol, Europol, various regional groups - are doing just that. The OSCE, an organization primarily for permanent political dialogue, can however act as a catalyst. I take this opportunity to thank the international and regional organizations with whom we have worked throughout the year and who will contribute to today's debates.

In thematic terms, we have worked on enhancing awareness and attention for trafficking in human beings, in small and light weapons and drugs. On trafficking of human beings, Belgium emphasized this year the effective prosecution of offenders. Related to that theme is a Belgian initiative that stands a very good chance of being adopted at the Ministerial in two weeks, on the sexual exploitation of children.



The threat of drugs is a good example of the true transborder approach that is needed. On heroine for instance, it is not enough to say that the vast majority of opiates today comes from Afghanistan, when the main smuggling routes run through various European countries with involvement of local crime at many points, and when the chemical precursors used to produce heroine are actually being imported into Afghanistan, and thus exported from other countries.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The OSCE has a unique concept of security. Security in the OSCE consists of three dimensions: the political-military, the economic-environmental and the human dimension. Respect for human rights and democratic institutions are integral parts of sustainable security. This shows the importance of the third topic of our meeting, the democratic control on police forces. As law enforcement agencies cooperate more and more on a transfrontier basis, we should reflect on how to extend democratic control and the protection of our citizens to that international cooperation. But our first task is, of course, at home: the Guidelines on Democratic Policing that the Strategic Police Matters Unit of the OSCE is launching today will certainly be a useful tool to that end.



Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen,

I like to be as concrete, as practical as possible. I am also a strong proponent of open dialogue. With so many senior police officers in this room, I feel surrounded by people who also prefer to be very frank and very operational. I therefore am certain that you will make the best possible use of this meeting for a free exchange of views with the common objective of better combating organized crime, together.

Thank you.