

**Check- against- delivery**

**Address  
by H.E. Lazăr Comănescu  
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**Mr. Chairman,  
Distinguished colleagues,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Allow me first to thank our Finnish hosts, in particular Foreign Minister Alexander Stubb, for their hospitality here in Helsinki. We commend Alexander and his team, for the excellent and dedicated leadership provided to our organization. My sincere thanks also go to our Secretary General and the Secretariat for their commendable work.

It goes without saying that my delegation fully aligns itself with the statement by Bernard Kouchner, in his capacity as President of the European Union. It is in this context that I would like to highlight some aspects of particular importance for my country.

Before doing that let me stress that for Romania the OSCE remains a key component of the security structure stretching from Vancouver to Vladivostok. Its unique comprehensive and co-operative approach has been an important contributor to stability and democracy in Europe.

**Mr. Chairman,**

My country remains fully committed to the OSCE's core principles and commitments in all three Dimensions. The OSCE has earned itself an uncontested position of leadership when it comes to confidence building, an outcome for which we should not forget that *engagement in good faith* is a prerequisite.

On the politico-military dimension, the OSCE has continued to make important progress during this year, especially in the field of reducing stockpiles of conventional ammunition, small arms and light weapons. Furthermore, we note with satisfaction the ongoing substantive discussions held in the Forum for Security Cooperation during 2008, especially those concerning the Security Dialogue.

As regards the non-military aspects of security, Romania remains committed to the strengthening of the OSCE role in the fields of countering terrorism and border security and management, and welcome the progress made toward that aim.

In this context, I would like to underline Romania's continuous support for the Madrid Ministerial Decision on Afghanistan. I take this opportunity to commend the efforts

made in this respect by the Secretary General and the Chair-in-Office. We are, however, disappointed that almost one year after the adoption of this Ministerial decision, it was not possible to launch the implementation phase.

**Mr. Chairman,**

*Conflict prevention* should remain the overarching goal of this organization, while a common denominator for pursuing it can be found in supporting the work of OSCE's Institutions, in the efficient use of its existing mechanisms and with the consent of all participating States to share both common values and a sense of common purpose.

We commend the Finnish chairmanship for the ambitious and steady work in addressing the "frozen conflicts" in the separatist regions of Transnistria, South Ossetia, Abkhazia and Nagorno-Karabakh. Constant work has been pursued with visits in these regions by the Finnish Chairman-in-Office and his Special Envoy and with their active pursuit of progress in the negotiation processes.

Unfortunately, this year, despite the effort of the CiO and of the OSCE Mission to the Republic of Moldova, both of which we highly commend, *the Transnistrian file* has remained to a large extent the prisoner of high politics. Possibilities to kick-start the negotiations were examined, willingness to re-engage was stated in Chisinau and Tiraspol, yet the negotiation process has failed to move forward.

Actually, no progress towards a settlement has been registered. We continue to be a staunch advocate of the „5+2” format, as the only legitimate framework for a settlement of the Transnistrian conflict. Fulfilment of the remaining commitments undertaken at the OSCE Istanbul Summit, almost nine years ago, will make a substantial contribution to the settlement of the conflict, in full observance of the Republic of Moldova's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

On *Nagorno-Karabakh*, we have taken note of the declaration signed by the presidents of both Armenia and Azerbaijan, the first joint document since the ceasefire. We hope that the decision to continue the negotiations based on the outcome of last year's meeting in Madrid, alongside with the commitment to work together with the co-chairmen of OSCE Minsk Group can contribute to facilitate a political settlement to the conflict.

Developments in *Georgia* have certainly marked the dynamics and the substance of the OSCE agenda. The impact of the August crisis in *Georgia* goes beyond the regional implications.

Realities that have been imposed unilaterally and artificially on the ground may make it necessary to revise the mandate of the OSCE Mission to Georgia. However, no new mandate should question or cast doubt with respect to Georgia's sovereignty and territorial integrity. We continue to support the renewal of the current mandate of the OSCE Mission to Georgia and believe that conflict resolution should remain at the core of its mandate. The Mission's contribution to the implementation of the ceasefire agreement, promoting dialogue, confidence building and cooperation between the parties involved should be allowed to become key lines of action, alongside an early resumption of the Mission's activities within South Ossetia.

Given the obviously difficult path ahead in solving these conflicts, we should be open to create and use synergies with other contributors, such as the EU, which provided last summer, in Georgia, a critical contribution to stop the violence.

**Mr Chairman,**

Romania remains concerned about the erosion of the CFE regime.

It is beyond doubt that the continuous presence of foreign troops on the territory of some CFE state parties, without their consent, has a negative impact on the overall situation in the region, and affects each of our countries.

In this context, we would like to renew our call on the Russian Federation to return to the full implementation of the CFE Treaty and to fulfill all its commitments thus contributing to enhancing our security in Europe.

**Mr Chairman,**

As regards the economic aspects, my country places great significance on issues related to energy, climate change and the environmental protection. I would like to highlight the importance of strengthening the cooperation in the Danube and Black Sea regions, also in the OSCE format. I fully share the views expressed, inter alia, by my Austrian and Bulgarian colleagues in this respect.

The Human Dimension of the OSCE is an area to which my country attaches particular importance.

We welcome the OSCE's increased attention to tolerance and non - discrimination issues. The organization in 2007 of the *High-Level Conference on Combating Discrimination and Promoting Mutual Respect* is just one proof in this respect and I am glad to mention that as a follow up, Romania hosted this year a Regional Conference on combating Anti-Semitism.

On the other hand, we praise the Finnish Chairmanship for attaching particular attention to the situation of Roma and Sinti people, and to the enforcement of efforts to implement the Action Plan on improving the situation of Roma and Sinti within the OSCE area. We call on future Chairmanships to keep this topic high on their agenda and give further impetus to the implementation of the above-mentioned Action Plan.

We have pleaded all along for capitalizing on the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Universal Declaration for Human Rights, in order to reiterate and reinforce our commitments in the human dimension in the ministerial Declaration, which I hope we will adopt here, in Helsinki.

Rule of law is yet another topic that we need to devote more attention to in the OSCE area. We believe that the cross-dimensional approach taken by the ministerial decision lays the foundations of future activities in this respect.

The OSCE interaction with the Alliance of Civilizations will generate mutually beneficial exchanges. We believe that this closer interaction can take place not only at the level of projects, but also by involving some of our relevant institutions and capitalizing on their expertise.

**Mr. Chairman,**

My delegation fully supports the adoption of the draft Convention on the international legal personality, legal capacity, and privileges and immunities of the OSCE. We

would like to encourage all participating States to assess the possibilities to give the OSCE an international legal personality as soon as possible.

Regarding the proposal to convene an OSCE Summit, as you may recall, since 2000 Romania has been advocating for such a Summit, provided that it is a substance-driven event with an agenda encompassing the interests of all participating States. In essence, an OSCE summit should generate a discussion, based on the existing commitments, norms, values, principles and mechanisms, with a view to further increase the efficiency of the Organization.

Indeed, there is no need to rethink the European security system from scratch. Overall, the current security system has served us well. Our focus should be on strengthening the existing architecture and commitments. In addition, we do believe that any new initiative in this area should take into account the need for full observance of the principles embedded in the UN Charter and the Helsinki Final Act. It goes without saying that the focus should be on advancing towards the settlement of frozen conflicts, and assessing the state of implementation of the existing principles and commitments.

I would stop here but not before wishing full success to the incoming Greek Chairmanship-in-Office and assuring our Greek colleagues of our full support and cooperation.