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Address to the OSCE Permanent Council

Vienna, 3 September 2003

Mr. Chairman,
Mr. Secretary General,
Distinguished Ambassadors,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

First, I would like to thank you for the invitation to address the Permanent Council this afternoon in order to inform the Council on the Assembly's Annual Session held in Rotterdam and to present the objectives of my Presidency of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly for the coming year.

Mr. Chairman,

The Dutch Chairmanship of the OSCE has been receptive to the activities and input of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, and we very much appreciated the presence of the Chairman in Office, Foreign Minister Scheffer, in our Annual Session. Parliamentarians showed great interest in his presentation and I believe the debate that followed was fruitful and enhanced the dialogue between the governmental and the parliamentary sides of our Organisation.

It is significant that for the first time an Annual Session of our Assembly took place in the country that holds the Chairmanship of the Organisation. I sincerely congratulate the Netherlands for the significant work carried out in the past months in the difficult and challenging task of guiding the OSCE. I also participated in the OSCE Ministerial Troika in The Hague two days prior to our Session. I was truly impressed by the energy and dedication that the Dutch have brought to their leadership of the OSCE.

Mr. Chairman,

I was honoured to be re-elected President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly in Rotterdam for the coming year and to represent here the more than 300 parliamentarians from our 55 participating States.

During my active involvement in the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, I have focused in three main areas: Parliamentary oversight in Security and Defence issues, election monitoring, and the development of parliamentary dimension of the OSCE and its relations with the governmental side. It was a year ago that I addressed this Council and I believe progress has been made. Although there is always room for improvement.

Today, more than ever, the OSCE needs to work for the implementation of the commitments of the OSCE participating States to ensure democracy, the rule of law and the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. The OSCE Parliamentary Assembly will do its part through parliamentary involvement in the activities of the OSCE, facilitating parliamentary dialogue and cooperation. This provides a vital link between governments and parliaments to join efforts in order that those fundamental commitments become realities for all our citizens. We must always strive to intensify our cooperation and our coordination in carrying out the important work of the OSCE.

In this new Europe, and in this new world, the OSCE and the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly must stand ready to respond to new threats and challenges, and this means evolving and adapting to new realities.

Report on the Rotterdam Annual Session

The Assembly's Annual Session in Rotterdam was devoted to *'The Role of the OSCE in the New Architecture of Europe'*, under which parliamentarians from the participating States debated and made concrete proposals on the future role of the Organisation in light of NATO and EU enlargements and also significant international events. I believe that this was both timely and appropriate and it coincided with the main efforts of the Dutch Chairmanship during this year.

We also considered some interesting indeed some controversial resolutions in the form of supplementary items. **May I express the hope that the governments of the OSCE Participating States and the OSCE itself will pay due attention to the conclusions and recommendations adopted in Rotterdam.**

The OSCE must define its objectives in a changing Europe. The Prague Summit that decided to enlarge the Atlantic Alliance, the creation of the NATO – Russia Council, and the Copenhagen European Council, that also decided to enlarge the EU, have started a debate on the evolving role of security organisations in

Europe. The enlargement of both the EU and NATO can not remain without significant consequences for other organisations. The OSCE must also reassert its place, and – most important – reassure its importance. The OSCE’s comprehensive approach to security, emphasizing human rights and economic development as well as military security issues places it in a unique position in this new European security architecture.

In this context we must remember that the OSCE remains the most flexible and responsive Euro-Atlantic foreign policy instrument for non-military contingencies. It is the primary instrument for early warning, conflict prevention, crisis management, and post-conflict rehabilitation in our region. The OSCE has the capacity to deal with both intra-state conflict and trans-national threats to stability. Its broad Euro-Atlantic and Euro-Asian composition and – again - its comprehensive approach to security are unique assets to the OSCE area. The OSCE has a co-operative approach to solving problems. Starting from the premise that security is indivisible, participating States have a common stake in the security of Europe and should therefore co-operate to prevent crises from happening and to reduce the risk of already existing crises becoming worse. The underlying assumption is that co-operation can bring benefits to all participating States, while insecurity in one State or region can affect the well-being of all. The key is to work together, achieving security together with others, not against them. **The OSCE, however, needs more visibility among our citizens.**

Brief outline on the Rotterdam Declaration:

To sum it up, the Rotterdam Declaration, which consists of the three general committee resolutions, states that

- o the real strength of the OSCE lies both in its capacity to respond to security threats and challenges and in its strong field presence.
- o For upholding the credibility of the OSCE, it is imperative to provide the OSCE Field Missions with adequate funding and high quality staff. The PA also reiterates appeals in the OSCE PA Bucharest Declaration (2000) for the OSCE to reduce reliance on seconded personnel.
- o Recommends that the OSCE Permanent Council be requested to consult the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly prior to making a decision to terminate any OSCE field office.
- o Recommends fostering the role of the OSCE in unarmed peacekeeping operations, and calls upon all participating States to contribute to the OSCE peacekeeping role by drawing up lists of experienced personnel that it can deploy at short notice.
- o Urges that, in line with any future requirements, appropriate capacities in the area of border management/border security be built up at the OSCE Secretariat through the creation of a corresponding work unit.

- o Welcomes the increasing focus by the OSCE on policing matters as well as the proposed opening of an OSCE Liaison Office in Brussels
 - o Urges all OSCE participating States to reconsider calls for zero real budget growth in the Organization and calls upon the OSCE to ensure a transparent and balanced budget;
 - o Regarding the economic aspects of the Annual Session's main theme, the Declaration stresses that the further enhancement of the Economic and Environmental Dimension of the OSCE, as an integral part of its comprehensive security approach, constitutes an essential prerequisite for the OSCE's substantial contribution to the new European Security Architecture.
 - o The States should make use of the OSCE as a forum for debating the risks and challenges of globalization and as a framework for regional and subregional economic activities.
 - o The Assembly appeals to participating States and international organizations to step up their efforts to ensure environmental security, and prevent and reduce environmental pollution.
 - o Highlights the need for the OSCE to raise a stronger voice against human rights violations in order to upkeep its importance and to make full use of its commitments implementation review mechanism to this end.
 - o The Rotterdam Declaration furthermore suggests that the OSCE adopt a more balanced regional approach when promoting the implementation of the participating States' human dimension commitments.
 - o In this regard the Declaration suggests that the mandate and resources of the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities be strengthened. The High Commissioner has to be able to deal with the protection of the new minorities resulting from migration in established democracies in the OSCE and to help them integrate into the societies of their new homelands, while recognizing their right to maintain their own cultural heritage.
- ❖ The Assembly also adopted a Resolution on the parliamentary follow -up of OSCE Activities at the National Level. Annual reports on the activities of the OSCE by national governments as well as reports on the activities of the PA by national OSCE PA delegations should be regularly debated in an appropriate manner in the national parliaments.
 - ❖ The resolution on renewing the OSCE partnership expresses concern about the weakening of transatlantic cooperation as a consequence of the disputes over Iraq and calls for reinforced cooperation on both sides.
 - ❖ In several resolutions, another recurring concern are the consequences of EU-Enlargement. One resolution was especially devoted to this topic and offered the OSCE as the ideal Forum for the integration of a greater Europe.
 - ❖ The PA urges to enhance the OSCE's role in the Mediterranean region by further promoting its Mediterranean dimension to achieve closer co-operation with Mediterranean Partners and the enrichment of its existing mechanisms to this end,

calling the Mediterranean Partners to adhere to the guiding principles contained in the Helsinki Final Act and encouraging them to use the framework and mechanisms of the OSCE, including those devoted to conflict prevention and post-conflict rehabilitation, as a model in order to make the Mediterranean Sea a sea of peace and security.

- ❖ The PA also pledges the assistance of the Parliamentary Assembly to Afghanistan as it seeks to establish a constitutional democracy based on the rule of law and respect for human rights.
- ❖ The Resolution on the International Criminal Court calls on the OSCE participating States to make their ratifications meaningful through effective national legal implementation that enables them to meet their principal obligations under the Rome Statute; that means co-operating with and assisting the ICC.
- ❖ On Combating Trafficking, the Assembly applauds the efforts of the Dutch Chairmanship and urges all participating States to sign and ratify the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime.
- ❖ The Resolution on Combating Anti-Semitism urges all OSCE participating States to ensure effective law enforcement by local and national authorities against criminal acts stemming from anti-Semitism, xenophobia, or racial or ethnic hatred.
- ❖ The Resolution on prisoners detained at the Guantanamo Base urges the United States to present the prisoners before a "competent tribunal" to have their status determined, to secure the prisoners' rights by letting them be represented by legal counsel of their own choice and to refrain from the use of the death penalty.
- ❖ The Resolution on Belarus emphasizes the will of the PA to continue a close cooperation especially with Parliamentarians from that country, but also criticizes in detail the social, political and humanitarian situation in Belarus, declaring support for civic and democratic forces in the country and calling for an OSCE observation of the next national elections.
- ❖ The OSCE PA appeals to all parties in Moldova, in particular to the Parliament and Government of the country as well as the Authorities in Transdniestria, to continue negotiating in good faith in order to find a solution to the problem of the status of Transdniestria as an integral part of a federal Moldova and in a manner that guarantees Moldova's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Promoting awareness of the gender issue remains a priority for the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly. We believe that the problem of gender imbalance in society and within our Organisation should be kept on our agenda until suitable solutions are found and implemented. Last year, the Assembly decided to include the gender issue on the agenda of the Plenary Meeting of our sessions, and this has been an important step forward.

The gender unit at the International Secretariat has regularly published reports on the gender equality situation in the OSCE participating States as well as in the

Organisation itself. The latest report, which was distributed at the Annual Session in Rotterdam, showed that although an equal number of men and women is employed in the OSCE overall, a thick glass ceiling prevents women from entering the leadership. It is also worrying that still less women are employed in the OSCE field missions. In Rotterdam, the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly discussed how to correct this situation, and several members stressed the need to ensure that participating States promote qualified women as candidates, especially for leadership positions.

It is clear that also within the Assembly, there continues to be a special need to encourage women to run for positions. I am very pleased that three out of our nine Vice-Presidents now are women. During the Rotterdam Session, a proposal was made to amend our Rules of Procedure in order to include a paragraph urging for the composition of National Delegations to be as gender balanced as possible.

At the end of the Rotterdam Session, **I appointed Vice-President Tone Tingsgaard from Sweden my Special Representative on the Gender Issue**, and she will continue to work on this matter and report her findings to the Assembly.

Activities and Objectives of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly

Allow me now, Mr. Chairman, to outline our activities in the past months and present what will be our lines of action for the coming period.

OSCE PA Meetings:

Winter Meeting (20-21 February)

A special debate on the situation in Iraq was one of the main highlights of the OSCE PA Winter Meeting. The extraordinary debate was placed on the schedule by the SC and demonstrated the importance of the OSCE as a forum for inter-parliamentary dialogue. The Winter meeting served as an interaction with the governmental dimension of the OSCE; second, to follow-up the Assembly's decisions taken in the Berlin Annual Session; And, third it provided further opportunities for MPs to discuss OSCE topics and issues in the three committees.

During the Winter Meeting the 8th OSCE Prize for Journalism and Democracy was also presented to Anna Politkovskaya.

Bern Conference (14 –16 May)– Third OSCE PA Sub-Regional Conference. Devoted to the promotion of Small and Medium-sized enterprises. Chaired by OSCE PA Vice-President Barbara Haering and organised at the invitation of the Swiss Parliament. The Conference adopted the Bern Declaration on Promoting Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMEs) in the OSCE area. The Declaration calls upon

OSCE participating States to create legal and regulatory environments favourable for the development of SMEs along with attractive taxation systems and guarantees to various infrastructures.

The Trans-Asian Parliamentary Forum (7-9 June) held in Almaty, Kazakhstan, in June gathered more than 90 parliamentarians from 30 OSCE participating States and Partners for Co-operation. The Forum focused on “The Trans-Asian Dimension of the OSCE: a Vital Security Link”. The Forum was organised by the PA with the cooperation of the UNDP and hosted by the Parliament of Kazakhstan.

The events and aftermath of 11 September 2001 have highlighted both the importance of security in Central Asia to security in the OSCE area as a whole as well as the need for increased dialogue among OSCE member governments and parliaments. This Trans Asian Parliamentary Forum could contribute to long-term security in the OSCE region by seeking to better coordinate the important resources that parliamentarians have at their disposal. The Trans-Asian Parliamentary Forum held in Kazakhstan last June – and that we hope to continue in a bi-annual basis - gave a priority place on our agenda to our Central Asian participants while also seeking to involve the Parliaments of the Asian Partners for co-operation in our work.

II. OSCE PA’s Ad Hoc Committees and Special Representatives

The Assembly’s Ad Hoc Committees are established to address issues or areas in the OSCE that can benefit from parliamentary attention. These committees continue to serve as an important tool in furthering the development of democracy and stability in the OSCE region. The Assembly currently has five functioning ad hoc committees. They are: the Ad Hoc Committee on Transparency and Accountability (chaired by US Congressman Steny Hoyer); the following ad Hoc Committees:

The Parliamentary Working Group on Belarus – chaired by Uta Zapf, Member of the German Bundestag - has visited Minsk in two occasions since January. The first visit in February (5 – 7 February) was organised in light of the Assembly’s Standing Committee to be held later that month at which time Belarus’ representation in the Assembly was to be discussed (Belarus was admitted to the PA by decision of the Standing Committee in Vienna, 21 February). The parliamentary working group visited Minsk in late May (25 – 28 May). This was the first visit since the decision of the SC to admit the Belarussian National Assembly into the PA. Discussions included the preparations for the 2004 parliamentary elections and ways to promote dialogue between Members of the National Assembly, opposition voices within the National Assembly, opposition political parties and civil society representatives.

The Parliamentary Working Group on Belarus intends to renew its activity this Autumn, It is my hope that the Belarusian authorities will engage in genuine cooperation with the Working Group which intends to organise a seminar in Minsk devoted to media issues.

The Parliamentary Team on Moldova Moldova – chaired by OSCE PA Vice-President Kimmo Kiljunen (MP, Finland) , in close co-operation with the OSCE Mission to Moldova – organised a two-day seminar (12 –13 May) in Chisinau devoted

to the theme of federalism. The seminar was designed to contribute to the current efforts underway to create a federal state. This seminar provided an opportunity for representatives of the two sides to hear about European experiences of federalism from representatives of parliaments of Austria, Belgium, Germany, the Russian Federation and Switzerland. The seminar was attended by legislators from both the Parliament of Moldova and the Transnistrian Supreme Soviet. The Parliamentary Team on Moldova intends to follow-up on progress with a visit in the early Autumn.

Ad Hoc Committee on Abkhazia (Georgia) – The Head of the Committee, newly elected Vice-President Tone Tingsgård (MP, Sweden), visited Tbilisi from 29 May to 1 June in order to discuss the future work of the committee holding meetings with Parliamentary representatives and also visiting the UN Observer Mission for talks on the role parliamentarians can play in supporting ongoing international efforts to find a solution to the conflict in Abkhazia.

III. Co-operation with the OSCE, OSCE Institutions, OSCE Missions

The Assembly has continued to work in close cooperation with the governmental side of the OSCE and with the OSCE institutions. In January the OSCE PA Liaison Office in Vienna was officially inaugurated.

OSCE PA Vice-President Gert Weisskirchen (MP, Germany) represented the PA at the 3+3 High Level Meeting (OSCE / CoE) held in the Hague in February. Several OSCE PA Members headed by Congressman Alcee Hastings (USA) represented the Assembly at the OSCE anti-Semitism Conference held in Vienna on 19 and 20 June. OSCE PA Vice-President Barbara Haering (MP, Switzerland) represented the Assembly at the 11th OSCE Economic Forum in Prague in May.

The OSCE PA (International Secretariat and Ambassador Special Representative in Vienna) have also actively participated in the OSCE Heads of Institutions Meeting, in the OSCE Heads of Mission Meeting, and in the Annual Security Review Conference

The PA co-sponsored with the OSCE CPC a two-day conference in the Ukraine (16-17 June) devoted to improving the integration of armed forces into civil society and strengthening parliamentary oversight of the army, police and security forces. This event will help ensure the full implementation of commitments under the OSCE's Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security.

Parliamentary Visits to OSCE Missions:

The OSCE PA has developed an active programme of visits to OSCE field missions. MPs have been able to get acquainted with the important work carried out by the missions. In this term groups of parliamentarians have visited the OSCE Mission to **Croatia** (10-11 February), the OSCE Presence in **Albania** (24-26 March), and the OSCE Spillover Mission to **Skopje** (7-9 April). These three missions were led respectively by Mrs. Ritta Süßmuth (former MP, Germany), Mr. Roberto Battelli (MP, Slovenia), and Mr. Göran Lenmarker (MP, Sweden).

The Initiative of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly to visit OSCE field presences is designed to better understand the work of the OSCE and to determine ways in which the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly can better contribute to the work of the OSCE in the field. Parliamentarians have responded positively to this initiative in past visits to missions. The international Secretariat is in the process of preparing new visits for the coming months, including a visit to the OSCE's Missions in Sarajevo and Belgrade for the Autumn.

Election Monitoring

The OSCE Parliamentary Assembly has continued to develop a particularly active programme for monitoring parliamentary elections. The presence of parliamentary observers at elections during transitional periods emphasizes the importance of legislatures as institutions that must provide a balance to executive authority. As parliamentarians are themselves directly elected public officials, local and international media often greatly value their observations.

An OSCE PA delegation of parliamentarians from six different countries observed the parliamentary elections in Armenia, held on 25 May. The Mission was headed by Giovanni Kessler (MP, Italy) who acted as special Co-ordinator of the OSCE CiO, and worked in close co-operation with Parliamentary Assembly of the CoE and the ODIHR.

The Co-operation agreement between the OSCE and the Parliamentary Assembly signed in 1997 between the Chairman in Office and the President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly has proven successful. As you know, the CiO normally designates a senior member of our Assembly, on our recommendation, as Special Coordinator to lead the OSCE Observation Mission. I have been myself appointed by several Chairpersons in Office to lead many important monitoring missions to various countries, including Albania, Georgia and Ukraine and also to Bosnia and Kosovo. The Presidential elections in Azerbaijan, scheduled for 15 October, and the parliamentary elections in Georgia (2 November) and Russian Federation (7 December) will also be observed by the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly.

Our Co-operation with the ODIHR has proven successful. I will be paying an official visit to Poland next week and visiting the ODIHR Headquarters in Warsaw.

V. Co-operation and Interaction with other International Parliamentary Assemblies

The OSCE Parliamentary Assembly continues to develop relations and cooperation with other European and Euro-Atlantic parliamentary organisations having missions similar or complementary to the OSCE.

The President of the Assembly addressed the Plenary sitting of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) in January and held meetings with the President of the PACE and representatives of various political groups.

Parliamentary Dimension of the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe . The 4th Parliamentary Conference of the Stability Pact for SEE took place in Brussels in May hosted by the EP (current chair of the parliamentary troika for the SP for SEE). **The OSCE Parliamentary Assembly will hold the rotating chairmanship of the Parliamentary Troika in 2004.**

The OSCE PA also participated in the European Parliament's Hearing on "New EU Strategy for South Eastern Europe" held in Brussels in March.

Regarding the Mediterranean, I led a delegation from our Assembly that met in Vienna, prior to our Winter Meeting, with the OSCE Contact Group with the Mediterranean Partners for Cooperation in order to coordinate our activities and approaches. As a follow-up to that meeting I called a meeting with our Partners in Rotterdam, which involved the participation of the Chairman of the Contact Group, Ambassador Petrov. I am also very proud to have received invitations by several Speakers of Parliament from the Mediterranean Partners. I will visit Algeria later this month together with a Delegation of parliamentarians. Also, the creation of a Mediterranean Parliamentary Forum to meet every year in connection with the Autumn Conference is another new initiative. We look forward to the forum to be held in Rome next October.

The Rome Mediterranean Forum will be held in conjunction with a Parliamentary Conference on Freedom of Religion and a meeting of the Standing Committee.

Priorities of the Presidency:

Mr. Chairman,

As President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly for the coming year it is my intention to continue working for the development of the Parliamentary Assembly as a reliable partner contributing to the success of the OSCE. Building on the progress made by my five predecessors, I will continue to develop our programme of OSCE Field Mission visits, continue to provide parliamentary leadership for election monitoring projects, continue to support the work of our ad hoc committees dealing with specific critical problems, continue to strengthen the dialogue between and among our own parliamentarians through the organisation of our meetings and conferences, and – most importantly – make every effort to increase the co-operation between the governmental structures of the OSCE and the more than three hundred elected parliamentarians that provide the OSCE with a firm democratic foundation.

I look forward to continue my active participation in the OSCE Ministerial Troika, to addressing the Ministerial Council in Maastricht in December, and to bringing parliamentarians from your countries to Vienna for our Third Winter Meeting next February.

We look forward to Ambassador Kubis' presence in our Standing Committee to be held in Rome on 10 October to brief on the OSCE budget, a positive step which emerged from those discussions. The kind of dialogue and information that we seek is aimed at better co-operation, not a micro management of OSCE affairs or an attempt in any way to control the OSCE. Our objective is to provide all necessary support to the OSCE.

The OSCE Parliamentary Assembly's sub office, headed by Ambassador Nothelle, which opened here in Vienna this year, is enhancing our cooperation by establishing closer links with the OSCE structures in Vienna, mainly the OSCE Secretariat and the Permanent Council.

As I have said before, and will repeat again, the Parliamentary Assembly wants to be a reliable partner in the OSCE which continues to make a positive contribution to its further development and to the achievement of its noble goals. The Assembly contributes to increase the visibility of the OSCE among our citizens, while improving public understanding of the important tasks this Organisation carries out. At the same time the Assembly will continue working towards the implementation by national legislatures of OSCE commitments.

We look forward to your comments and will be pleased to respond to them, and to any questions you may wish to put.

Thank you very much for your attention