

Address of HM the King of the Belgians  
OSCE, Vienna, 28th September 2006

Mr Secretary General,

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am delighted to address the OSCE today. Since the Helsinki Final Act, your Organization has played a crucial part in the processes of detente, of rapprochement and of cooperation within a reunited Europe.

The longstanding investment of my country in the OSCE culminates now in our Chairmanship of your Organization. The OSCE faces important new challenges, and we hope the Brussels Ministerial Council will mark a new departure for an organization which, like all others, needs to adapt to a constantly changing geopolitical environment.

Europe has gone – and is still going – through major changes. OSCE is now transatlantic and Eurasian, something nobody could have reasonably foreseen 15 years ago. Diversity is now as much as unity the trademark of OSCE. This evolution actually represents a challenge as well as an opportunity.

The success of the OSCE in the years ahead shall be judged at its capacity to accommodate change and diversity, while developing a new common vision, a sense of common purpose firmly based on the acquis of shared values and commitments. There will be no lasting stability and prosperity without democracy, effective respect for the rule of law, civil liberties and human rights.

Beyond its core mandate – the promotion of security through co-operation – the OSCE has a strong record and active institutions in the field of human rights, minority protection, freedom of the media, election monitoring and furthering democracy. The Organization is well known and very appreciated for these activities. Through its agencies and field missions, the OSCE has also proven its added value in post-conflict rehabilitation and institution building.

Finally, I would like to stress how much my country supports the activity of the OSCE in the combat against human trafficking. This is a policy area where a continent-wide approach based on fundamental values and rights is absolutely essential. Belgium, as you know, attaches particular importance to the defence and protection of those who fall victim to trafficking and organized crime. I can only congratulate you for the work already achieved, and urge you all to continue elaborating a legal and institutional framework aimed at eradicating these inhuman practices.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, In conclusion, let me formulate my best wishes of success for the important new tasks that the OSCE needs to tackle. The peoples of our continent need the OSCE and the fundamental principles and values it represents. So let me raise my glass to all of you, to your Organization, and to the achievement of ever more Security and Cooperation in Europe.