



Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

Statement by the OSCE Secretary General

H.E. Marc Perrin de Brichambaut

**at the 1094th Meeting of the Ministers' Deputies of the Committee of
Ministers of the Council of Europe**

29 September 2010, Strasbourg

Mr. Chairman,

Your Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I thank you for the invitation to speak. It is a great honour.

2010 is a special year for the OSCE. On 1 August, thirty five years ago, the Helsinki Final Act was signed, setting forth the principles and commitments on which our Organization is founded. This year, we also celebrate the 20th anniversary of the adoption of The Charter of Paris for a New Europe, which put an end to the ideological and political division of wider Europe and gave a new impetus to the ideas and commitments which were laid out in the Helsinki Final Act.

Since Helsinki, the OSCE has developed into the largest and most inclusive organization in the Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian space, providing an effective forum for political and

security dialogue among its 56 participating States. The OSCE has acquired considerable expertise in conflict prevention, crisis management and post-conflict rehabilitation, which is carried out by a network of field presences, specialized Institutions and a Vienna-based Secretariat.

Since Helsinki and Paris, the face of wider Europe has changed – mostly for the better. Divides have been bridged, and terrible conflicts have been settled. New States have been created and difficult political transformation processes engaged. But we remain far from the ambitious vision set forth in Paris two decades ago, a vision of a “new era of peace, democracy and unity.” Today, the Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian area faces many different security challenges.

These arise from problems that continue to divide the 56 participating States of the OSCE – including from conflicts that remain unresolved and the uncertainty facing our region’s conventional arms control regime. The crisis in Kyrgyzstan has reminded all how volatile the blend is of state weakness, political instability and ethnic tensions, just as the August 2008 conflict in Georgia underlined the tensions that endure within and between States in many parts of our region. Across the continent, States continue to struggle with the challenge of building democratic systems.

Threats arise also from outside the OSCE area, including from the spill over of instability in neighbouring States and regions, such as Afghanistan. Transnational threats, such as international terrorism, organized crime, trafficking in human beings, drugs and small

arms, recognize no borders. In addition, new threats are emerging – such as those undermining energy and cyber security.

All of this raises again the question of the unity of the Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian area. Challenges pull States in different directions. Divisions have emerged, sometimes even within States. New lines of division are seen to be drawn.

The OSCE participating States have recognised the urgency of this situation and have started to take action. In 2009, they undertook an open and comprehensive dialogue on Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian security – called the Corfu Process. This sought to restore confidence and to improve the dialogue on wider European security.

On this basis, and thanks to the active Chairmanship of Kazakhstan, the OSCE participating States decided to build upon the Corfu Process by organizing a Summit of Heads of State and Government in Astana on 1-2 December. The first Summit in eleven years, and the first such meeting in Central Asia, this event will provide the 56 participating States with an historic opportunity to deepen their commitment to consolidate a meaningful security community extending from Vancouver to Vladivostok based on comprehensive, co-operative and indivisible security. The 2010 OSCE Summit will also seek to make our Organization itself more operational, more flexible, and better equipped to respond to the challenges of the new century.

Mr. Chairman,

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The history of the last thirty-five years teaches us that lasting peace and genuine security cannot be achieved without safeguarding democratic values, human rights and fundamental freedoms. Hard security alone is not enough; human rights and the rule of law are an indispensable part of genuine and long-lasting security. The human dimension of security is precisely where the Council of Europe and the OSCE share values and objectives. This core concept unites our two Organizations.

We are natural partners in ensuring security and stability in Europe. Carrying out democratic reforms, promoting respect for human rights and consolidating the rule of law is at the core of our Organizations' activities. Each in its own way, both organizations promote political stability and security on the basis of good governance, economic development, democracy and respect for human rights.

The Council of Europe and the OSCE are core pillars of rules-based international governance in turbulent times. Our Organizations complement each other: the Council of Europe with its legally-binding standards and monitoring mechanisms in the field of democracy, rule of law and human rights, the OSCE with its political commitments, its comprehensive, multi-dimensional security concept, and its strong field presence.

Terrorism and organized crime, poverty and inequality, environmental degradation and democratic deficits are just some of the pressing challenges of the day. These challenges often jeopardize fundamental freedoms and many core principles of human rights.

The magnitude of these challenges demands closer and more effective co-ordination, particularly in these times of economic and financial constraint.

We have taken major steps in acting together in the past. Our two Organizations have established a partnership that is down-to-earth and result-oriented. This interaction ranges from regular communication and exchange of policy views to practical co-operative efforts at the field level.

This year marks the fifth anniversary of the establishment of the OSCE – Council of Europe Co-ordination Group, which will hold its 12th meeting in October. The Co-ordination Group has proven instrumental in increasing the pragmatic and operational interaction between the two Organizations.

Our Organizations work especially closely in the four priority areas of co-operation: the fight against terrorism, combating human trafficking, the protection of the rights of persons belonging to national minorities, and promoting tolerance and non-discrimination. Much has been achieved. But there is room to do more, to take these achievements further and to better co-ordinate undertakings.

Of course, our co-operation is not limited to these four priority areas. The two Organizations work jointly in election observation, legislative reform, and promotion of human rights and democratization, to name only a few areas. The OSCE's Office of Democratic Institutions and Human Rights enjoys fruitful co-operation with the Council of Europe's Commissioner for Human Rights and the Venice Commission on a wide range of issues.

Institutional co-operation is complemented by an exceptional relationship between the Secretariats. Since Secretary General Thorbjørn Jagland took office in October 2009, we have met on several occasions and established a close working relationship.

Last but not least, many OSCE field presences work closely with the Council of Europe on issues related to human rights, rule of law and democracy-building. An appealing example is the implementation of the OSCE – Council of Europe exemplary agreement for providing assistance to local governments in South Eastern Europe. In Serbia, for instance, we jointly provide legislative assistance to the Ministry of Public Administration and Local Self-Government and support local government reform.

Our interaction in South Eastern Europe could be a model for greater co-operation in regions where it still needs to be improved, such as Eastern Europe and the Caucasus. By exploring further synergies and addressing common issues together, I have no doubt that we can have a much greater impact, at both the local and the global levels.

Mr. Chairman,

Excellencies,

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As Secretary General Jagland stated in his address to the OSCE Permanent Council in Vienna a few months ago, we have not only an interest, but a vital need to work much more closely together. Both of our Organizations have direct responsibilities in similar areas that require continuous co-operation and closer co-ordination.

Both the Council of Europe and the OSCE are engaged in a process of necessary evolution and change. This is a unique chance for the two Organizations to reinforce their complementarity and to work more effectively in tackling the challenges of the day.

As I look to the needs of this young century and to the challenges that our States and societies face, I have no doubt that the Council of Europe and the OSCE form essential twin pillars of the rules-based international order that we so desperately need. I look forward to our ever deeper co-operation.

Thank you for your attention.