



## **Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe**

**Secretary General Lamberto Zannier**

### **Opening Statement Conference on Prevention of Illicit Drug Trade on the Internet**

**Vienna, 25 July 2013**

Mr. Chairperson,  
Distinguished Guests,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure to warmly welcome all keynote speakers and participants to this OSCE-wide expert Conference on Prevention of Illicit Drug Trade on the Internet.

This is in fact the fifth OSCE-wide expert Conference focused on trafficking in illicit drugs and the diversion of chemical precursors that we have convened since 2007. The theme of this year's Conference is the "Prevention of Illicit Drug Trade on the Internet". While the Internet is primarily a force for the good, it is also emerging as an online marketplace for all sorts of illegal goods, including drugs. By facilitating communication and providing access to knowledge, expertise and logistics, the Internet also contributes to the rapid diffusion of new "trends" in the illicit production and illegal distribution of narcotic drugs.

Internet-based drug trafficking includes not only the sale of illicit drugs, but increasingly the illegal sale of pharmaceuticals containing narcotics and psychotropic substances. Illegally obtained pharmaceuticals of this type – which have a high abuse potential – have quickly become a significant problem in many countries. Not only does the Internet facilitate illegal drug sales, but websites describe how and which prescription medicines can create effects similar to those of more “traditional” illicit drugs.

In order to start addressing threats posed by illicit drug trade on the Internet, participants in last year’s OSCE-wide Conference encouraged our participating States to work together to develop new technologies to identify drug dealers on the Internet. They also called for expanding the network of computer forensics specialists to prevent criminals from using modern communication technologies to sell illicit drugs.

This year’s Conference provides an opportunity to advance the discussion and exchange best practices on the implementation of the International Narcotics Control Board *Guidelines for Governments on Preventing the Illegal Sale of Internationally Controlled Substances through the Internet* (adopted in 2009). Such a dialogue can help to identify ways of strengthening prevention mechanisms against illicit drug supply by using modern communication technologies and as new methods of forensic computer investigations.

It will also be highly useful for the Conference to discuss the implementation of the Guide on “*Drugs in cyberspace: understanding and investigating diversion and distribution of controlled substances via Internet*” that was adopted by the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission of the Organization of American States in 2006.

In the OSCE Concept for Combating the Threat of Illicit Drugs and the Diversion of Chemical Precursors that was adopted last year, our participating States unanimously stressed that the world drug problem continues to pose a serious threat to the health, safety and well-being of all humanity. It undermines sustainable development, political and socio-economic stability and democratic institutions. It threatens international peace and stability, as well as national and regional security and the rule of law.

Tackling this global challenge is a common and shared responsibility that requires effective international co-operation and demands an integrated, multidisciplinary, mutually reinforcing and balanced approach.

The spread of illicit drugs and the diversion of chemical precursors continue to be one of the most dangerous and profitable forms of transnational organized crime worldwide and across the OSCE area. The United Nations currently estimates the value of annual illicit drug trafficking to be around \$320 billion. These profits are likely to increase, also because of the opportunities that the Internet offers to drug dealers for reaching out to new customers and for better co-ordinating their criminal efforts.

According to the 2013 UN *World Drug Report*, although the use of most illicit substances is declining or stabilizing in Western and Central Europe, the rate of illicit drug use in this region remains higher than the global average. In the European Union alone, according to the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA), at least 85 million adults have used an illicit drug at some point in their lives.

We are already well aware that successful prevention of drug trafficking requires co-ordinated global efforts. For its part, the OSCE is very well positioned to assess and respond to specific requests from participating States to foster dialogue and to build capacities to prevent and counter illicit drug trafficking. The **OSCE Secretariat**, the **Institutions** and **16 Field Operations** provide a framework for multi-stakeholder dialogue, awareness raising, exchange of expertise and networking. Thanks to our comprehensive security concept, the OSCE brings together expertise on counter-narcotics, anti-terrorism, cyber-crime, border security and money laundering, while at the same time upholding the rule of law and ensuring respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.

The OSCE toolbox for addressing the problem of illicit drugs is in fact quite impressive and diverse. The 2012 OSCE *Concept for Combating the Threat of Illicit Drugs and the Diversion of Chemical Precursors* provides a solid platform for closer co-operation of all

interested stakeholders – including participating States, Partners for Co-operation, international organizations, civil society and the media.

The *OSCE Strategic Framework for Police-Related Activities*, also adopted last year, provides further guidance in developing effective and comprehensive national anti-drug strategies with an emphasis on stemming drug supply. The Framework offers a useful platform for developing training plans and programmes that address drug-related issues for relevant law enforcement agencies, while encouraging their active co-operation.

The *OSCE Border Security and Management Concept* creates a solid foundation for enhancing our stakeholders' capacities to detect and interdict trafficking of illicit drugs across borders of OSCE participating States, thus strengthening barriers to illicit narcotics supply.

On the ground, our *Field Operations* provide tailored assistance to their host countries in developing national anti-drug strategies and holding training courses for policymakers, border and customs officials, police and judicial authorities.

The OSCE *Border Management Staff College* located in Dushanbe, Tajikistan, provides specialized training aimed at strengthening barriers to illicit drug trafficking.

Both at the planning and at the implementation level, the OSCE closely co-operates and co-ordinates its efforts **with other interested international organizations** and forums. Among these, **UNODC** plays an important role. Our two organizations draw upon our respective comparative advantages, which are duly reflected in the two-year OSCE-UNODC Joint Action Plan which was recently renewed for 2013-2014. The OSCE also enjoys close co-operation in this area with other international partners, including the INCB, the Paris Pact Initiative, CARICC, Interpol, Europol, CSTO and SELEC.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Internet is a dynamic, global medium. To effectively prevent drug traffickers from abusing the Internet to expand their reach, participating States must co-operate more and more closely. Their co-operative efforts should also involve Internet service providers, the financial sector, pharmaceutical associations and relevant international organizations.

Only by joining efforts can we better understand the scope of the problem and then propose and develop effective common responses to prevent illicit drug trade on the Internet, while giving due respect to international norms and standards and upholding the rule of law and fundamental human rights.

I am hopeful that this Conference will provide us with some good ideas on how to strengthen our international co-operation in this field. Your efforts can make a real contribution to preventing the Internet from fostering the illicit drug trade. So I wish you a very productive discussion and I look forward to hearing your conclusions and recommendations.

Thank you.