

**Address by H. E. Przemysław Grudziński  
Under-Secretary of State  
in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland  
at the Opening Session  
of the XVI OSCE Ministerial Council  
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ENGLISH only

**Mister Chairman,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

- I am pleased to address this distinguished gathering and to express my deep conviction that the results of our two days discussion in Helsinki will help indeed to determine the main directions of the OSCE activities during the next year thus strengthening the entire Organization.
- Let me dedicate special thanks to the Finnish Chairmanship and personally to the Chairman in Office, Minister Alexander Stubb. We do appreciate all the efforts that the Chairmanship has been taking this year to steer the Organization through difficult and challenging times and, in particular, during the conflict between Russia and Georgia.

Mr. Chairman,

- Our approach to the majority of the issues being discussed here today has already been clearly described in the statement delivered by France on behalf of the European Union. Nevertheless, I would like to add a few comments and observations in our national capacity.
- This year created heavy burdens and unexpected tasks for the OSCE. No one could have expected that the complicated situation in the Caucasus and tensions linked with the conflict in South Ossetia and Abkhazia would lead to the military conflict and war between Russia and Georgia.
- Let me underline the OSCE context here, namely that principle of respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity that is enshrined in many of the OSCE documents has been violated. It cannot be accepted to solve any kind of conflict by military force. We cannot applaud the use of military means and, what is more worrying, the disproportionate use of force. We are still deeply concerned by the military, economic and humanitarian situation in the area. The growing presence of the Russian Federation's forces in the South Ossetian and Abkhaz regions of Georgia and the Russian Federation's political demands concerning the character of the mandate of the OSCE presence in Georgia cannot help to solve existing problems in the spirit of Helsinki. The OSCE, in our view, should continue to provide framework for solutions to all regional conflicts and should stand ready to assist in their implementation whenever appropriate.

Mr. Chairman,

- Poland believes that the OSCE continues to play a leading role as a forum for dialogue, co-operation and mutual understanding between states. It has not exhausted its potential as an important instrument of strengthening security in the vast area that this Organization covers.
- The OSCE, through its well-developed tools, continues to care about human rights, keeps assisting civil society and nongovernmental organisations and involving them in the wide spectrum of its activities. The OSCE expertise together with the effective system of its institutions and field presences has continuously proved its utility and allowed the Organization to become the point of reference for many international and domestic state and non-state actors.

Mr. Chairman,

- For Poland, human rights and democratic principles are the foundations on which all we should stand and they are as important today as they were in Helsinki 33 years ago. Nowadays, in the year of 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, when we witness growing number of abuses and instrumentation of human rights, they seem to be even more relevant. Poland applauds work of the OSCE Institutions and in particular the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, which expertise is of primary importance in the process of democratisation and improving human rights in our area. In performing its functions the ODIHR is not a mechanism for implementing double standards – it is a mechanism for developing trust.
- Certainly, there are other important tasks for the OSCE we see to be strengthened and developed, as appropriate. The politico-military dimension of the OSCE remains one of the core functions and tasks for the Organization.
- In this context we need to stress that the current situation around the CFE Treaty continues to cause our deep concern. The suspension of the implementation of the Treaty provisions by one State-Party and the recent armed conflict in the Caucasus region show clearly how important is to preserve the regime of conventional arms control. We are afraid that the threat of use of force in the international relations reappeared, at least in the regional scale. We do not need such reorientation in the politics in Europe, we do not agree with putting into question the commitments to the fundamental OSCE principles on which stability and security in Europe are based, including the principles which underpin the CFE regime.
- Thus we call again to closely study the proposals put forward by several states that are also the members of this Organization. We are convinced the entry into force of the adapted CFE Treaty should create a new spirit in arms control and allows not only for the extension of the regime in Europe but also for assessing what and where are the problems to be solved subsequently.

Mr. Chairman,

- One cannot forget the non-military dimension of security that in the recent years has won the important place in the OSCE activities. Among the most difficult challenges we face is international terrorism. Our response must be comprehensive and draw upon all OSCE's three dimensions. We were encouraged to see the OSCE responding to request of Central Asian States for assistance in border security and policing. This was a very important step into the way of stabilising security and curbing the Afghan drug trade. We hope OSCE projects in this area finally would be implemented.

Mr. Chairman,

- The OSCE is the right place to discuss all the security concerns that any participating state feels necessary to raise. In this context let me make few comments about the Russian initiative on the new European security architecture (known as the President Medvedev initiative). Let me thank Minister Lavrov for presenting new thoughts that seem to develop the speeches by President Medvedev in Berlin and Evian. Those ideas prove that all the states, being big or small have their own security concerns and such concerns should not be ignored.
- The OSCE is the right place to discuss these concerns, prior to any actual negotiation on any new ideas. The OSCE has quite broad spectrum of mechanisms and fora, e.g. the Annual Security Review Conference, where the new ideas, possibly in a more detailed form, can be presented and discussed.
- A number of issues raised by President Medvedev have already been formulated elsewhere (e.g. respect for territorial integrity, sovereignty, non-use of force, etc) - in the UN or OSCE documents. Shall we change, or reinforce them? Finally, why we should limit our discussion to the security architecture, or security institutions in Europe? Obviously, we are open for further dialogue. However, the order of events should be rather reversed: a summit under the OSCE umbrella should rather finalize and not initiate discussions.

Mr. Chairman,

- Let me finish my remarks with deep conviction that the role and place of the Organization within the system of multilateral institutions is and should remain unique. The OSCE norms and standards in all spheres have become a pattern in most of international relations. This is the place where the implementation of all of these norms can be assessed. This is the place where all aligned and non-aligned states can freely discuss their security concerns and suggest what could and should be improved. This is the forum that gathered quite unique pool of instruments and experts in the broad security matters. That is why I strongly believe there is a future for the OSCE. With this voice of optimism I would like to wish all the best to the incoming Chairman-in-Office – Greece.

**Thank you for your attention.**