



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

**Report by the  
OSCE Secretary General,  
Ambassador Marc Perrin de Brichambaut,  
at the 15 OSCE Ministerial Council Meeting**

**Madrid, 29 November 2007**

Mr. Chairman, in your inaugural intervention before the Permanent Council in January, you called for sobriety in understanding the challenges faced by the participating States and ambition in determining the role the OSCE may play in response.

You hit the mark on both accounts.

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The challenges facing the participating States are becoming more complex, more critical. In times of tension and uncertainty, it is worth recalling the need for *consistency* by all the participating States engaged in the OSCE:

- Consistency in terms of keeping in mind the standards and commitments adopted by all of them while seeking answers to these challenges;
- Consistency in seeking to implement those standards and commitments in their entirety across all three of the Helsinki dimensions, as well as in the other domains that they have jointly identified;
- Consistency in keeping the mandates they have entrusted to the Organization sufficiently resourced to translate them into realities.

Ministerial Councils are a moment that allows the participating States to focus again on the ambitious approach to security they have adopted together and rekindle this necessary consistency of purpose and action. The inspiration that brought the participating States together remains as valid as ever. The further projects they adopt together are no less important in view of current circumstances.

**First, it is worth re-affirming that the OSCE approach to security, conceived and expressed in 1975, remains sharply relevant for today's new and complex challenges.**

At the heart of the OSCE approach to security is the principle, enunciated in the Helsinki Final Act, that security starts with the “inherent dignity of the human person.”

For the OSCE, security means connecting States among themselves, connecting the human dimension with the economic and the political–military dimensions, and connecting the many different actors, including participating States, Partners for Co-operation, partner international organizations, civil society, NGOs, with the media, youth and the business world, whose interaction determines the overall environment in which we live.

This connected security concept is not unique to the OSCE, but it continues to be our signature strength. It requires continuous attention and support in an Organization as inclusive as the OSCE.

Sharing this approach in all of its facets is one of the objectives of the OSCE's vital relations with the Partner States. The view that security can only be comprehensive is also shared with other international and regional organizations, with many of which the OSCE has significantly broadened dialogue and enhanced co-operation in recent years.

Too often, in recent years, the temptation has been indulged to consider trade-offs between liberty and security, as if they were interchangeable goods. Our predecessors in Helsinki understood that the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms, healthy economic and environmental governance and political-military co-operation between States are essential, mutually reinforcing pillars of a single, comprehensive concept of security.

Today, the OSCE continues to need this holistic and cross-dimensional approach to security. Many threats to the security of our States and the societies they represent are complex, dynamic and trans-national. Tackling challenges such as environmental security, terrorism and trafficking in human beings requires approaches that cut across the OSCE's three dimensions and make the most of the synergy between them.

Cross-dimensionality has not resulted from a single agreement, but from the accumulated decisions that the participating States have taken in Paris, Budapest, Istanbul, Maastricht, Vienna and elsewhere to address "security as an integral whole."

This approach to security is put into practice every day by the OSCE Institutions. The High Commissioner on National Minorities remains as vitally relevant today as when the office was established in 1992. The Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights has become a model for setting standards of good practice in building democratic institutions and election observation, adapting them continually to changing circumstances and helping participating States to implement them effectively. The OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media works patiently to provide participating States with early warning on violations of freedom of expression.

The OSCE's nineteen Field Operations work every day to help States implement their commitments across the three dimensions. In Georgia, for example, the

*Economic Rehabilitation Programme in the zone of the Georgian-Ossetian Conflict* embodies the imperative of connected security – economic rehabilitation helps to address real human needs and to build confidence between communities, which over time can create the conditions for conflict settlement and lay the ground for post-settlement reconciliation.

As decided by the participating States, the Secretariat also has a key function in acting across dimensions – this, through coordinating with the Field Operations and the Institutions and also through the practical work of the thematic units inside the Secretariat, on police training, enhancing border security, supporting the fight against terrorism and the struggle against the trafficking in human beings.

Of course, making cross-dimensional security work in practice requires effective coordinating tools to link multiple projects and activities into an integral whole that advances the mandates given to the Organization by the participating States. Chiefly, it requires continuous attention and support of the participating States. It is in this way that we can best help States to help themselves.

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

**My second point is a question: How can the participating States ensure that the Organization meets the aspirations they have for it? How can we strengthen the link between mandates and the means available for implementing them?**

Ministerial Council decisions build on mandates defined by earlier Councils and Summits to provide guidance for the day-to-day work of the Organization. This has proven to be an effective method for developing an evolutionary OSCE acquis. The Secretariat and the institutions have the task of assisting the implementation of this ever-increasing body of commitments undertaken by the

participating States. The Chairman-in-Office is committed to encouraging the participating States to act effectively in following through on the numerous components of this body of commitments, which form a complementary whole.

As is their right, the participating States have called upon the Organization to work with limited resources. They have reminded us that the work of the Organization does not take place in a vacuum, and that competing priorities in the OSCE area and beyond translate into budgetary restrictions for the Organization.

Improving effectiveness in this restricted budgetary environment calls for greater transparency, close internal co-ordination and, wherever possible, long-term planning.

This is why, as a result of the reform process initiated in Maastricht, a set of tools is now in place to help ensure coherence between mandates and programme implementation.

Today, the participating States receive the Organization's budget in a new, more pragmatic format, clearly linking mandates, programmes and the resources needed to implement them. New working practices increase the transparency of the Organization's activities. With these steps, we have laid the groundwork for a more efficient OSCE.

However, optimization of expenditure alone may not be enough to bridge the gap between the ambitious tasks that the participating States have set for the OSCE and the fixed or declining resources that have been allocated for their implementation. The participating States will ultimately have to prioritize the mandates that they have adopted so far. Failing to do so would risk making the Organization less effective at a time when it is required to carry out an ever-wider array of tasks.

In order to prioritize these tasks, the participating States should be able to assess the effectiveness of current programmes and to link performance to goals. In this context, I draw your attention to the importance of carrying on with the work already accomplished with regard to performance-based programme budgeting.

I encourage all participating States to make use of this approach when making choices about how to manage resources, where to invest new efforts, where to cut back and where the Organization as a whole brings added value.

At the same time it is vital, as we take this prioritization process forward, that we retain the Organization's cross-dimensional approach, which is what makes the OSCE unique.

We should act with respect also for the principle that a commitment, once undertaken, must be honoured. As we prioritize, it is clear that among 56 participating States different priorities will emerge. What has been decided by consensus and adopted as a politically-binding obligation may be amended only by consensus. In allocating increasingly limited resources, it would be a good thing if we could rely on a coherent decision-making process rather than taking decisions solely on the basis of the need for cost-cutting.

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In 56 states across three continents, the OSCE is expected to work for stability, prosperity and democracy through political dialogue and through practical work that makes a lasting difference.

Participating States can take pride in their past achievements, and in the fact that the OSCE is unique among international organizations in its scope and inclusiveness. Where else do such a wide variety of actors share and do so much together?

However, common security through co-operation requires consistency of purpose, sustained political efforts and effective allocation of resources. Should circumstances in greater Europe become more difficult, with old issues re-appearing and difficult new challenges to the Helsinki agenda testing the unity of the OSCE community, these inputs will be particularly in need. As such, today's Ministerial meeting is perhaps more critical than other such meetings in the past. Ministers will direct the Organization in terms of what they expect from it as a forum and as a tool-kit to address serious regional and cross-dimensional challenges.

I look forward to the fresh political impetus that will result from your deliberations over the next two days, under the leadership of the Chairman-in-Office, Miguel Angel Moratinos.

Thank you for your continued support.