



Permanent Mission of the Republic of Slovenia to the OSCE

Gumpendorfer Strasse 11/II/18
A-1060 Vienna
Tel: +43 1 581 34 08 15
Fax: +43 1 581 34 17

Statement by Mr. Andrej Benedejčič, Minister Plenipotentiary, Deputy Head of Mission, on Border Security and Management (Session 2) at the 2004 Annual Security Review Conference in Vienna, 23 June 2004

Mr. Coordinator,

On May 1, Slovenia and nine other countries of Central and Eastern Europe joined the European Union. This was an event of historical significance not only for us, the new member states, but also for the Continent as a whole. The European mosaic of nations, cultures and languages is finally coming together. However, while celebrating this development, we must not forget about the countries that remain outside the borders of the enlarged Union. The efforts to erase the old dividing lines in Europe must not result in the rise of new barriers.

In this sense, the OSCE Border Security and Management Concept has to be "dual use" in its orientation – both to counter security threats of the 21st century and to keep the OSCE area open for free and unimpeded flow of people, goods and ideas. Our approach should, therefore, be based on integrating the present OSCE activities in the field – for example the Ohrid follow-up and initiatives in Central Asia – and in various dimensions – such as fight against terrorism and human trafficking – into a coherent framework, with a view to achieve full synergy with other international actors through necessary coordination.

Our approach should also take into account the fact that border-related issues in the OSCE area differ substantially because of different security and political realities, because of history, and because of bilateral and regional cooperation. In this regard, BSMC should take fully into account the main OSCE principles, notably the inviolability of borders and territorial integrity. In other words, our approach should be flexible and capable to encompass a variety of interests and necessities. Moreover, it should be an integrated approach. Integrating policies of all agencies and institutions that have competence in the field of cross-border movement of people, goods and services should be one of our main focuses.

We should also put strong emphasis on a regional perspective. Because of common interests, concerns and sensibilities, regions are a kind of natural test-bed for developing closer cooperation. Therefore, it might be important to have an approach that is less than OSCE-wide and more than purely bilateral. The formula "more than one and less than many" could ease our work in this respect.

In doing so we should rely on the existing know-how and possibly develop some gap-fillers. Our goal should be to deliver comprehensive and tailor-made packages aimed at developing comparable standards by using a diversified, regional approach and creating realistic conditions for networking. Our approach should also explore the possibility to take into

account the resources of non-governmental organizations, think-tanks and institutes. In this connection, I would like to point out that recently, on June 10 and 11, the Office of the President of Slovenia, in partnership with the EastWest Institute, hosted a conference on integrated border management, where many interesting ideas were discussed. We believe that this sort of practice is useful and should be continued.

In conclusion, Mr. Coordinator, let me say that Slovenia sees the BSMC as a concrete contribution towards the Helsinki goal of a Europe open and free. Work in this area is all the more important to us, because the recent enlargement of the European Union resulted in a situation where for the first time we have in the Union a number of Slavic countries, while others remain outside, right on its borders. Slovenia is trying to address this situation by establishing a Forum for Slavic Cultures next week, on June 29, in Ljubljana. We hope that this Forum will contribute to bridge-building across the new frontiers of the European Union. We believe, however, that other efforts are also needed. In this sense, the OSCE and its Border Security and Management Concept could play an important role.

Thank you.