



Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
2019 Chairmanship OSCE-wide cyber/ICT security conference

Opening remarks

Secretary General Thomas Greminger

Bratislava, 17 June 2019

Thank you for your kind words, Deputy Prime Minister Raši. I am very glad that the Slovak 2019 OSCE Chairmanship is placing a strong emphasis on promoting cyber stability between States in the OSCE area.

This year's cyber/ICT security conference has an impressive agenda. I find particularly interesting the sessions devoted to '**inclusion as a driver of regional cyber security**' or '**artificial intelligence**', as well as the series of side events for non-governmental actors. It is also very promising to see that the Conference will be enriched by a scenario-based discussion and the United Nations Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) regional consultations.

Excellencies,

Colleagues,

Ladies and gentlemen,

The OSCE has come a long way from the formation of an **Informal Working Group** eight years ago to the adoption of two **Ministerial Council Decisions**. This represents a very positive example of what participating States can achieve when they work together to reach shared goals.

But OSCE CBMs can only work if all OSCE participating States make use of them.

So the focus must now be on **operationalizing our CBMs. Promotion of effective crisis communication channels**, international **co-operation, especially at the policy level**, as well as measures to **enhance national and regional cyber/ICT security capacities**, are at the core of these efforts.

So I **encourage OSCE participating States to make better use of OSCE CBM mechanisms during future cyber/ICT incidents and call on those that have not yet done so, to “adopt a CBM”** in order to promote CBM implementation.

Dear colleagues,

The **UN continues to play a central role** in strengthening cyber stability. No other platform has managed to produce such overarching recommendations on matters of international law, norms, confidence- and capacity-building.

So I **warmly welcome the Chairs** of the Group of Governmental Experts and the Open-Ended Working Group – **Ambassador Patriota and Ambassador Lauber**. The two Working Groups are strongly interlinked with the OSCE **as almost half of the GGE members are also OSCE participating States**.

Regional organizations have a very important role to play in this debate.

They can be **incubators for new ideas** and practical efforts that relate to CBMs as well as an **implementer of globally accepted agreements**, like the GGE reports. So, regional organizations are both incubators and implementers.

Similarly, **regional organizations have developed their own innovative concepts** that might equally be applicable to the global level. For example, I wonder whether the **“adopt a CBM” initiative could also be applied to legal norms**. Targeted campaigns, driven by volunteer states, could open up new space for suggestions on how these norms can be best applied and implemented.

The OSCE is honored to be the first regional organization to engage in consultations with the GGE and I am convinced that the best practices applied in the OSCE region can positively contribute to the new round of GGE negotiations.

Let me highlight four specific ideas for enhanced global-regional collaboration:

- First, we should have a frank discussion on **how parallel efforts** on the global and regional level **could be streamlined and harmonised to support each other** – maybe even through the **development of a clear framework or work plan**.
- Second, there is significant potential for **aligning previous GGE reports and regional efforts**. For example, the norm that underlines that States should not **conduct or knowingly support ICT activity that intentionally damages critical infrastructure** is very much **in line with OSCE CBMs number 15**, adopted by France, Romania, Slovakia and Spain.
- Third, **the OSCE's network of field operations** and our sub-regional capacity building experience **provide us with insights into national concerns**. So it **can help clarify where newly proposed UN priorities line up best with national and regional needs**.
- Fourth and finally, the new round of GGE negotiations could consider how to proactively engage with regional organizations such as ours via **regional implementation roadmaps** that could be jointly developed and **annexed to Working Group reports**. Such roadmaps may include **guidance and recommendations on regional implementation of norms, CBMs and related capacity building**. Having regional organizations and the GGE jointly develop these documents could **significantly improve the implementation process and the overall impact of the new reports**.

Dear colleagues,

Implementing the OSCE's cyber CBMs is of critical importance in the current security environment. They provide States with **means to jointly address non-political and**

practical issues. They also offer **mechanisms that can result in routine interactions between States, which in turn lead to more ambitious goals.** Ultimately, they **enhance and institutionalize international co-operation** on cyber security.

And this can have broader implications: **OSCE cyber CBMs can help rebuild trust**, which is the prerequisite for reducing tensions and preventing conflict.

To conclude, I would like to stress how impressed I am by the large number of cyber/ICT security co-ordinators from capitals with us today. This is the largest presence of co-ordinators the OSCE has ever had during a Chairmanship conference. I encourage you to take this unique opportunity to present your ideas on how regional efforts within the OSCE can contribute to global cyber/ICT stability efforts.

I wish you exciting and stimulating discussions today and tomorrow.

Thank you.