



ADDRESS

**by the OSCE Chairman-in-Office Dr Dimitrij Rupel
at the Conference on the Reform of the OSCE
"15 Years After the Charter of Paris for a New Europe: Problems, Challenges and Risks"
Brdo, Slovenia, 7 September 2005**

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Welcome to Slovenia. I hope that the peaceful surroundings here in Brdo will put you in the right kind of mood to reflect on the OSCE and its future.

My compliments to the Swiss Government for their initiative and support, and to Dr. Warner and Professor Ghebali of the Graduate Institute of International Studies in Geneva and to Professor Bebler at the University of Ljubljana, and their teams, for co-organizing this conference.

Reform of the OSCE has been a hot topic this year. As you know, a Panel of Eminent Persons came out with a number of recommendations at the end of June, the Parliamentary Assembly and the Swiss Foundation for World Affairs have made an input, the Centre for OSCE Research produced a report, and there has been a special issue of the *Helsinki Monitor*. There have also been a number of newspaper editorials on the subject, as well as speeches.

There is enough food for thought on the table.

I will not go into the specifics of the reform process because I am sure most of you are familiar with it, and the Head of the OSCE Task Force Dr. Frlec will later give you a report on the activities of the Chairmanship.

Rather, I would like to take this opportunity to share with you my views on where we go next.

I see this conference as the beginning of a more operational phase in strengthening the effectiveness of the OSCE. This meeting and the one organized by the *Helsinki Monitor* in Vienna on Friday should provide good opportunities to reflect on the recommendations that have been made, to debate their respective merits, and to consider the strategic future of the OSCE.

Then it is time for the participating States to get down to business. So far the reform process has been out-sourced. Now it is time for participating States to roll up their sleeves, identify common objectives, and draw up a blueprint for reform.

High level consultations will be held in Vienna on 12 and 13 September. The goal is to examine the report of the Panel of Eminent Persons as well as other possible contributions. The conclusions and recommendations of the consultations will be submitted to the Ministerial Council through the Permanent Council for appropriate action.

I hope that at the high level consultations participating States will clearly articulate their views on what the OSCE's strategic priorities should be and how its effectiveness can be strengthened. It will then be necessary to identify which issues should be the focus of reform in the short, medium and long term.

At the Ministerial Council I prepare to do two things. One is to have a Ministerial Declaration which addresses the central point of the Panel report, namely to create a stronger sense of common purpose, to make all States feel that they have a stake in the Organization, and that they are treated as equals. This also means they have equal obligations towards OSCE commitments.

The second is to reach agreement on a blueprint for strengthening the effectiveness of the OSCE. This would include issues that you are all familiar with - updating the rules of procedure, improving the decision-making process and so on. By agreeing on common objectives reform can become a unifying rather than a dividing issue.

I am quite satisfied with how the reform process has progressed so far. Within half a year we have gone from a pessimistic sense of crisis to a constructive sense of expectation. I believe that this period of self-reflection has been useful, and we will come out stronger as a result.

It is no coincidence that a number of international organizations are going through such a process all at the same time. This year we begin to take a hard look at the European project and its future. NATO is defining a new role for itself, taking into account strategic priorities like Afghanistan. The Council of Europe Summit was designed to refresh and renew that Organization's work. At its recent Summit, the CIS proposed looking at ways of reforming itself. Next week I will travel to New York to take part in the World Summit that will grapple with the UN's reform.

Inter-governmental organizations need to serve the interests of their states. As those interests change, the organizations must adapt. We are facing a number of serious threats – terrorism, intra-state conflicts, poverty, infectious diseases, climate change, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, organized crime and the potential instability of failing states. To deal with these challenges the world community needs to re-tool itself.

I am glad that we have made progress during Slovenia's Chairmanship. I would like to turn good intentions into more concrete plans and decisions by the end of the year. I have to note, however, that reform is a continuing, long-term process and cannot be finished overnight.

You can help. Most of you are outsiders with insider knowledge. Some of you are insiders who are close to the process. You have a great deal of knowledge about the OSCE and its past periods of transition, and you can help us to put things into perspective.

We need to move, and you can help shape that process. Your ideas can help us to drive forward the process of improving the OSCE's effectiveness. You have the benefit of being able to think "outside the box". I therefore encourage you to be bold, while considering what is politically possible.

I thank you for your on-going interest in the OSCE. We need initiatives like yours to add fresh ideas and impetus to the OSCE's work.

I wish you a pleasant and productive stay here in Brdo and hope that this conference will generate momentum for our work as Slovenia's Chairmanship heads into the home stretch.