



Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

Opening Remarks

Secretary General Lamberto Zannier

Commemorative Event

Helsinki, 10 July 2015

Minister Soini,
Minister Dacic,
Minister Burkhalter,
Special Envoy Erler,
Executive Director Fedotov,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

As we commemorate the anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act, it is important to look back to where we come from. I still remember well how back in 1986, as I dealt with the first basket at the CSCE Vienna Review Conference, my work primarily focused on the review of the implementation of the Decalogue of fundamental principles enshrined in the Helsinki Final Act (as well as confidence- and security-building measures). As we are talking about the violation of principles today, I can't help but think that this systematic and focussed review was an important function of the CSCE that somehow got lost over time, and which should be revitalized today. World politics was then heavily polarized, though it was also the time of *glasnost* and *perestroika*. Neutral and non-aligned states like Finland, Yugoslavia, and Switzerland played a key role in bridging the divide, and there were new openings for making substantive progress. It was a time that held great promise despite a still prevailing mood of caution and scepticism.

After the end of the Cold War, much of this promise became reality. But we also saw the emergence of new challenges and sources of conflict. For the CSCE, and later the OSCE, it was a period of expansion and institutionalization. In the 1990s the Organization focused

on supporting democratic transitions, but we also saw the emergence of the protracted conflicts, and we had to develop new tools for conflict prevention and crisis management. The new order after the Cold War already contained the seeds of some of the problems that developed later. Not surprisingly, early warning, conflict prevention and crisis management commanded the greater part of my attention as Director of the Conflict Prevention Center a few years later.

Unfortunately, too little was done at the turn of the century to bridge the increasing discrepancy between the ambitions of the *Istanbul Charter for European Security* and the real-life stagnation and stalemate in key OSCE areas, including a lack of progress on the protracted conflicts and arms control, following the non-ratification of the adapted CFE Treaty signed in Istanbul at the end of long negotiations I was personally involved in. The brief war in Georgia in 2008 was a wake-up call in this regard, and new but insufficient attempts to re-engage followed, leading to the 2010 *Astana Commemorative Declaration*.

Today, against the backdrop of the crisis in and around Ukraine, fundamental divisions are even more evident and the debates among participating States are reminiscent of times we had long thought overcome.

While discussions on implementation of principles and commitments are an essential part of any effort to come to terms with the current situation, we need to make sure that there also remains enough open space for genuine debate. We also need to understand that we live in a rapidly changing world full of increasingly complex security challenges, so we must ensure that our divisions do not keep us from working together on the larger, more global and transnational challenges that affect the lives of our citizens and all participating States without exception.

Looking back, we should be inspired by the leaders who, despite the stark divisions at the time, developed a vision and mustered the courage to put in place the foundations of the security system which have served us well for forty years – but which are now in jeopardy. As I have tried to do for myself, I believe that we should all make an effort to look back in order to seek inspiration to move forward with renewed determination.

We know what it takes. With forty years of experience, we know that confidence and trust can only be built through open and frank dialogue. This requires sustained efforts, patience, lots of patience and perseverance. During today's deep crisis of European security, I am convinced that the OSCE's inclusive platform for dialogue and joint action is best placed to serve as a key forum for engagement.

Thank you.