



Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

Secretary General Lamberto Zannier

**Opening remarks
Ministerial Council Dublin**

6 December 2012

Excellencies,

Ministers,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Thank you to our Irish hosts for the warm welcome to Dublin. I have enjoyed excellent relations with you personally, Tánaiste, and with your dedicated and talented team.

I would like to echo preceding speakers in welcoming Mongolia as the 57th participating State of the OSCE. Minister Bold, it is a pleasure to see you sitting at the table in your new capacity. Your country's decision to ask for admission to this Organization is proof of the continuing relevance and value of our *acquis* of norms, principles and commitments. I look forward to working with you and to the contribution your country will make to the OSCE.

Today, as we begin our plenary session, difficult negotiations are still ongoing. This is the *modus operandi* of a consensus-based organization and should not surprise us. One of the OSCE's comparative strengths is that diverging views and differences are not covered up, but rather aired and debated with the overarching goal of finding a common basis to move forward. The OSCE is a mirror of the realities on the ground as we strive to make progress towards the

vision of a Security Community as set out in the Astana Commemorative Declaration.

And as we address the future of the organization and its future agenda, I see different perspectives and visions emerging from our discussions. Yet, while differences as to the balance between the priorities on our agenda have always been there, we need to avoid that narrow interests prevail over common ones. I sincerely hope that constructive compromises can be found, allowing us to engage in earnest in concrete work, with the ambition to be able to celebrate the 40th Anniversary of the signing of the Helsinki Final Act with visible progress, an updated agenda and a realistic workplan.

Our efforts are strengthened by the continuity of purpose of the next three Chairmanships, which have all expressed their firm commitment to take the process forward.

The Irish Chair, taking as their departure point the deliberations of the Astana Summit in 2010 and the solid work of the Lithuanian Chair, have put forward a balanced and pragmatic program of work for this year. This reflects the hallmark of their Chair – the desire to keep the momentum in all three dimensions of our work, enhanced co-operation with relevant international organizations and a sharp focus on efforts to resolve the protracted conflicts.

As I had the pleasure of attending the Chairmanship Conference on the Northern Ireland Case Study here in Dublin last April, I fully appreciated the genuine efforts by the Chair to put their experience in conflict resolution at the disposal of our organization, showing how commitment to peace does improve the lives of the people on the ground. This event complemented my own efforts to implement the Decision taken by you at the Vilnius Ministerial on enhancing

the OSCEs capabilities in all aspects of the conflict cycle, including early warning and early action and however difficult and however great the differences, we must continue to work with determination to promote progress in conflict resolution.

One of my priorities remains the stepping up of engagement with think tanks, academics and civil society. Our network of academic institutions and other civil society actors should be broadened, for us to strengthen our ability to involve our societies in our discussions, but also for them to be able to provide inputs which would enrich our debates. I was delighted that this was picked up by four of our participating States that supported the IDEAs meetings in Berlin, Warsaw, Paris and Moscow. I also took note with interest of the recommendations put forward in the EASI report at the Munich Security Conference. In this same spirit, I initiated the OSCE “Security Days”, as a regular annual event, in June prior to the Annual Security Review Conference. This process of “track two” engagement will continue with an event on reconciliation later this month; we are also beginning to plan an informal discussion on the future of arms control in Europe for early March.

I have made efforts to maintain effective working relations with our Field Operations, Institutions and with the Parliamentary Assembly. I believe that effective cooperation among the different parts of the Organization is key if we want to better profile ourselves to outside partners and interlocutors. And I remain convinced that our Parliamentarians can provide a strong contribution to our common endeavours.

I have also continued to seek ways to enhance the profile of our organization, actively engaging with many of you and with our external partners. The increasing focus of our agenda on challenges of a transnational or global nature

has lead us to further develop and operationalize our interaction with partner Organizations, to develop synergies, to avoid overlap and to focus on our strengths and comparative advantages. I welcome the emphasis the Chair has placed on developing recommendations for effective OSCE engagement with relevant International Organizations, which has lead to an open debate on how to enhance our activities of external cooperation.

Last year in Vilnius you called for renewed attention and impetus to the OSCE Partnership for Co-operation. As you requested me “to engage in action oriented co-operation with the Partner countries in all three dimensions”, I initiated a process of informal consultations with both group of Partners, which has resulted into a more “hands on” approach in our relationship. At the same time, I used every opportunity to engage in political dialogue with high-level representatives from partner countries.

On the basis of the demands expressed by the Mediterranean Partners, regional initiatives in the fields of combating trafficking in human beings, counter terrorism and sustainable energy will be implemented in 2013.

Our interaction with the Asian Partners was also intensified during the year. The Asian Partners have continued to engage in dialogue and contribute substantially to OSCE activities, including by providing in several cases financial and human resources.

To strengthen the OSCE’s engagement with Afghanistan, after extensive consultations with pS and Partners, in particular with Afghanistan and Central Asian participating States, we have designated a realistic number of projects as priorities for implementation in the short term, focusing mainly on border

management, police training and counter-narcotics. But we have also actively sought to reorient our activities in Central Asia for our organization to better assist our participating States in the region to address challenges related to Afghanistan and to contribute to sustained regional stability and development.

A theme I often raise with many of you is the impact of financial constraints and the need to find efficiencies while maintaining the quality of our work and effective implementation of your decisions. For my part, I have endeavored to put forward a budget that reflects the realities of the current financial situation while remaining cognizant that new tasks need to be supported by adequate resources. As we plan a budget effectively below zero nominal growth, which will entail a progressive decrease of the volume of our activities, there is an increasing need for a more strategic debate as to where our priorities should lie.

In concluding, I would like to re-iterate my full support to the incoming Ukrainian Chairmanship as we approach the final stage of preparations for the year ahead. At the invitation of Minister Gryshchenko, I had the pleasure to address the annual meeting of Ambassadors in Kyiv in October and I look forward to visiting again with colleagues from the Troika and Chairs of the Committees before the end of the year to continue our discussions on priorities and working modalities for 2013. And, of course, I wish to confirm to all of you that you can continue to fully count on our highly professional and very committed staff, and on my personal engagement, in assisting you in the implementation of your decisions and in your future endeavors to further strengthen the role and increase the effectiveness of our organization in addressing our common challenges.

Thank you.