



**Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe**

**European Security: Time for a Rethink?**

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OSCE Secretary General  
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Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I thank the Diplomatic Academy for the invitation. The Academy performs a unique role as place of training, scholarship and debate. It is a great pleasure to be here.

The title of my talk is “European Security: Time for a Rethink?”

The question mark at the end of the title could be taken away. Why? Because, European security is undergoing a “rethink” today. Indeed, twenty years after the 1990 Charter of Paris for a New Europe, the question of pan-European security is being discussed once again at the highest levels. And this question is being discussed across the broad, indivisible European security community that was born after the end of the Cold War, an expanse that stretches from North America to Eurasia, from Vancouver to Vladivostok.

NATO has recognized the need for a “rethink” by launching an intensive debate over its new Strategic Concept. The EU is also wrestling with new challenges and roles following the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty. Both of these processes are addressing questions of concern to Russia and all members of the Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian security community. Yet the one place where a truly pan-European discussion is currently under way, a discussion that involves all states from Vancouver to Vladivostok as equal participants, is the OSCE. Why did this new dialogue start? How has it proceeded? Where is it going? These are the three questions that I wish to address with you. I will end with some thoughts relating specifically to the challenges and opportunities this process provides for Russia.

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The origins of the current “re-think” of European security lie in the proposal made by the Russian President on 5 June 2008. Speaking in Berlin, President Medvedev underlined the need for a pan-European conference to be convened to consider the proposal to draft a legally-binding European Security Treaty. With this proposal, President Medvedev put the question of pan-European security back on the table.

Overshadowing this question were difficult challenges. These included the erosion of Europe’s conventional arms control regime, primarily linked to the CFE Treaty. Conflicts remained unresolved in some OSCE participating States and volatility was high, as we witnessed tragically in the South Caucasus in August 2008. The global economic crisis hit all parts of the OSCE area, some harder than others. New uncertainty was rising in the field of energy security, where we saw a major crisis in January 2009. New transnational threats were gathering inside and from outside the OSCE.

No less real, there were perceptions of a crisis of trust in European security. These perceptions came from different angles. The difficult challenges facing democratic transformation have given rise to perceptions in some states that the process launched by the 1990 Paris Charter was stalling. For other states, the perception was rising of new dividing lines and 'double standards' in European security.

The proposal of the Russian President came in this difficult context.

The OSCE was the first international organization to react to the Russian proposal. At the 16th Ministerial Council in Helsinki, Finland organised the first high-level, multilateral discussion on the future of European security.

In June 2009, the OSCE Greek Chairmanship followed this up with an informal meeting of OSCE Foreign Ministers on the island of Corfu. Forty four ministers and five deputy ministers attended the meeting, along with representatives from NATO, the EU, the CSTO and the CIS.

As a result, the Greek Foreign Minister declared that a "Corfu Process" had been launched – with the objectives of restoring trust and confidence between the OSCE's participating States, assisting them in implementing their commitments, and clearing the ground for progress on outstanding challenges.

At the OSCE Ministerial Council in Athens, Foreign Ministers formalized the “Corfu Process” as an OSCE-wide exercise. In so doing, Ministers made four points.

1. First, the OSCE participating States had made ‘significant progress’ since the ‘reunification of Europe and the elimination of Europe’s old divisions.’
2. At the same time, much work still remained to attain the vision of a ‘free, democratic, and more integrated area, free of dividing lines and zones with different levels of security.’
3. Third, Ministers agreed that that OSCE, with its broad membership and ‘multidimensional approach to common, comprehensive, cooperative and indivisible security’ provided ‘the appropriate forum for this dialogue.’
4. Finally, the importance of political impetus to push forward the new dialogue was underlined. Specifically, Kazakhstan’s proposal to hold an OSCE summit in 2010 was ‘noted with interest.’

Ministers agreed also on modalities for moving forward. First, the “Corfu Process” would continue on the basis of an ‘informal, regular and open dialogue’ in Vienna. Eight thematic areas across the three dimensions of security were singled out for discussion, taking in also arms control crisis management and conflict resolution. OSCE effectiveness and interaction with other organisations were also identified.

The first results of the 2010 Corfu Process will be discussed in early July in Vienna. The Kazakh OSCE Chairmanship has called for an informal ministerial meeting of OSCE Foreign Ministers in Almaty on 16-17 July – to review progress and decide on next steps.

This is where we stand. Informal discussions have not been easy, but many proposals have been made. A deadline has been set for late June. An informal ministerial meeting will take place in July. There is the prospect of a summit before the end of the year.

In moving ahead, difficult questions will have to be answered.

How can we link our dialogue with actual developments in the OSCE area? Discussions cannot be divorced from reality -- in Georgia, for instance, and in other troubled areas. What is the link between the OSCE process and other major processes underway in Europe -- in NATO, for instance? How can we ensure that the more inclusive security community represented by the OSCE is not left behind as others move ahead? Can we make a successful transition from the current informal "brainstorming" phase of the Corfu Process, where each side is clarifying its own proposals, to a more serious process of negotiation in preparation of an eventual OSCE Summit? Will it be possible to balance the interests of all participating States?

A final question concerns Russia. Is the Corfu Process a satisfactory response to President Medvedev's proposal for a European Security Treaty? To speak frankly, the Russian position has exposed a certain amount of ambiguity. The Corfu Process was born from President Medvedev's proposal, yet Russia at times has seemed reluctant to address that proposal in this framework. Russia has highlighted the need for the OSCE to strengthen its early warning and crisis management capabilities (pointing critically to the role of the OSCE in not heading off the August 2008 war in the South Caucasus). The Corfu Process is a chance to consider how to strengthen the Organization's conflict prevention toolbox. Can Russia

resolve these ambiguities and make the most of the promise that this Corfu Process, and the OSCE more broadly, holds? I believe that it can.

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

What does all of this mean?

First, that European security remains unfinished business. The promise of a ‘Europe whole and free and at peace with itself,’ raised in the 1990 Paris Charter, has not been fulfilled. There is a good scope for a re-think of European security today – working on the basis of what we have achieved and within the framework of the comprehensive and indivisible concept of security that we have been pursuing for 35 years in the CSCE and the OSCE.

Second, the OSCE and its Corfu Process offer a unique chance to bring that vision closer to reality. For instance, the OSCE reacted quickly and effectively to the crisis in Kyrgyzstan -- making use of the full range of tools at its disposal. The OSCE role will continue to be vital throughout the year. This is an indication of how much we can achieve, when we can muster the political will to stand together in facing common challenges.

Can the OSCE serve as an effective forum for advancing and defending Russian interests within an inclusive, indivisible Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian security community? The answer to that question lies not in Vienna, but in Washington, in Brussels, here in Moscow and in the capitals of all of the OSCE’s participating States. They say that “it’s the poor craftsman who blames his tools,” and for too long the participating States of the OSCE have allowed the

divergences among them to undermine their overall sense of common purpose and the effectiveness of the unique Organization they have created. The Corfu Process, and the prospect of an eventual OSCE Summit, offer the opportunity to correct this.

In fact, the OSCE offers an unparalleled forum for Russia, covering three continents where all partners, treated on an equal footing, can make use of a recognized set of institutional tools. The OSCE's comprehensive concept of security and its broad approach to problems are well suited for the challenges of the 21st century and for those faced by Russia. The Organization can act as a platform for regional cooperation and a balancing factor among the multiple organizations that address different issues of common interests. The OSCE is *the* place where the principle of the indivisibility of security can be bolstered in the Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian area.

Indeed, the OSCE remains a powerful reference and tool for pan-European co-operation. Russia can derive great benefits for its interests from a strengthened OSCE. For this, however, the OSCE needs Russia to be fully engaged as a generator of ideas and best practices. This is vital for the Corfu Process. It is also vital for the process of building indivisible, cooperative and comprehensive security across the Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian areas. We are not there yet. Through the OSCE, we can continue working to this goal.

Thank you for your attention.