



OSCE Priorities in 2005

Slovenia has taken over the Chairmanship of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe in an interesting period:

- The year 2005 is a year of important anniversaries, including the 30th anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act, the 60th anniversary of the end of World War II, the 15th anniversary of the Paris Charter for a New Europe and the 10th anniversary of the Dayton Peace Accord.
- It follows the most extensive EU and NATO enlargement of all time.
- The OSCE is in a process of reflecting on its role in countering new threats in a changed geo-political environment.

Apart from the priorities set by the Slovenian Chairmanship for 2005, it will deal with the key issues of finding agreements on the OSCE budget for 2005, the OSCE scales of contribution and a new Secretary General.

During its Chairmanship, the Republic of Slovenia will try to balance operations within the OSCE. It will strive to enhance transparency of the work of the Organization, partly through consultations with participating States. It will furthermore take an unbiased approach in considering interests of individual countries and strive to find ways to reach consensus to overcome issues that have arisen within the OSCE in recent years.

OSCE Reform

The decision on the establishment of a Panel of Eminent Persons to strengthen the effectiveness of the OSCE was adopted at the Sofia Ministerial Council. The Chairman-in-Office will, after consulting with all 55 participating States, appoint up to 7 members to the Panel and will act as its focal point. The Panel will present its report no later than the end of June 2005. The representatives of all 55 participating States will discuss the Panel's report and other possible proposals at a specially convened session. Their decisions and recommendations will be conveyed at the Ministerial Council in Ljubljana.

The Working Group on Reform and the Informal Group of Friends of the Chair on Improving the Functioning and Effectiveness of OSCE Field Operations will continue to discuss ways of improving the functioning of the Organization.

Implementing the Strategy to Address Threats to Security and Stability in the 21st Century

The work of politico-military dimension stems from the Strategy to address threats to security and stability in the 21st century as well as relevant Maastricht and Sofia Ministerial Council decisions. The Chairmanship will continue with the efforts to implement them.

Preventing and combating terrorism

Preventing and combating terrorism is high on the Chairmanship's agenda. The OSCE should promote the implementation of existing commitments, as well as explore new ways to promptly address the threat of terrorism, while ensuring respect for human rights.

Border security and management

Following the decisions of the Sofia Ministerial Council, the Chairmanship will continue the work on elaborating the OSCE Border Security and Management Concept, aiming to adopt it at the Ljubljana Ministerial Council. The concept should help participating States in setting up open and secure borders that will allow free movement of persons and goods while reducing the threat of terrorism, tackling organized crime and preventing illegal trafficking.

Tolerance and non-discrimination

In co-operation with Spain, the Chairmanship will organize in Cordoba an OSCE Conference on anti-Semitism and other forms of intolerance in June 2005. The Chairman-in-Office has also extended the appointments for the year 2005 of the three Personal Representatives of his predecessor to promote greater tolerance and combat racism, xenophobia and discrimination in its participating States. These three appointments are the Personal Representative on Combating Racism, Xenophobia and Discrimination, also focusing on Intolerance and Discrimination against Christians and Members of Other Religions, the Personal Representative on Combating anti-Semitism, and the Personal Representative on Combating Intolerance and Discrimination against Muslims.

Elections

Extensive discussions on issues concerning elections that are already taking place will be continued. These will include the proposal to establish a working group dealing with all issues concerning OSCE election activities and to draw up proposals for possible improvements.

Implementation of the OSCE Strategy Document for the Economic and Environmental Dimension

The Chairmanship believes that work in the economic and environmental dimension should aim to fully implement the OSCE Strategy Document for the Economic and Environmental Dimension to enhance co-operation, good governance, sustainable development and protection of the environment.

Migration and integration

The Chairmanship recognizes that issues concerning migration and integration are becoming an important challenge across the OSCE area. These issues will be discussed cross-dimensionally - within the economic dimension as well as human dimension of the OSCE. The Chairmanship

will promote best practices in the areas of migration management and efficient migrant integration policies.

Preventing trafficking in human beings

The Slovenian Chairmanship will co-operate closely with the OSCE Special Representative on Combating Trafficking in Human Beings, aiming to harmonize activities in countries of origin, transit and destination. Following a decision of the Sofia Ministerial Council, the Permanent Council is bound to elaborate an addendum to the OSCE Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings to address the particular issue of child victims. It will do this by 31 July 2005 through the Working Group on Gender Equality and Anti-trafficking.

OSCE Document on Stockpiles of Conventional Ammunition and the Document on SALW

The Chairmanship believes the continued implementation of the Document on Stockpiles of Conventional Ammunition and the Document on Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) will give way to new ground for future OSCE activities. Along with awareness-raising, it is of paramount importance in successful management of the projects.

Regional issues

The Chairmanship will invest every effort towards resolving issues in Moldova, Georgia and Nagorno Karabakh.

In South-Eastern Europe, it will focus on consolidating progress in refugee return, protection of national minorities and capacity-building. The year 2005 will be very demanding in this regard, with expectations concerning Kosovo, relations between Serbia and Montenegro, the situation in Macedonia, and so on.

The Chairmanship assesses Central Asia as critically important for the collective security of the OSCE region and therefore remains committed to strengthening a constructive relationship between the OSCE and Central Asian states. Engagement on issues of high priorities for the OSCE, namely transnational terrorism, economic development and democratization, will be continued. The Chairmanship will focus on areas of real significance involving follow-up and long-term commitment such as education, migration and regional co-operation in the area of border management. An emphasis will also be put on activities related to the preparation and conduct of elections in 2005.

The 30th anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act, the 60th anniversary of World War Two, and the 15th anniversary of the OSCE Paris Charter

The Chairmanship recognizes that the Helsinki process significantly contributed to the establishment of democracy, the rule of law and the protection of human rights in Europe. It furthermore made an enormous contribution to the alleviation of tensions between the two former blocs and to the establishment of security co-operation. The CSCE/OSCE thus became one of the foundations of the security arrangement in Europe after the end of World War Two. In light of the recent enlargement of NATO and the EU, a new situation has developed, calling for

serious reflection on the role of the OSCE to preserve and enhance its effectiveness and strengthen its overall capacity. The Chairmanship firmly believes that the series of important anniversaries in 2005 provides a good opportunity for this reflection.

Strengthening partnerships with the Mediterranean and Asian partners of the OSCE

The OSCE Mediterranean Seminar in 2004 formulated a number of specific proposals and suggestions for the strengthening of the Partnerships. Together with Belgium as the Chair of the Mediterranean partners, the Chairmanship will aim to organize follow-up activities. It will actively co-operate with Bulgaria as the Chair of the Contact Group with the Asian Partners for Co-operation.

Close co-operation with the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly

The Chairmanship believes the co-operation between the OSCE governmental and parliamentary spheres should be strengthened, particularly in this jubilee year. Thus special attention will be given to the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly meeting to be held in Washington D.C.

Improvement of co-ordination with other international organizations and enhancement of co-operation with NGOs

The Chairmanship recognizes the evolving nature of the modern security environment as well as the evolving nature of other organizations. The Chairmanship stresses the importance of working with regional and sub-regional organizations, and civil society, to make the most effective use of their respective strengths. Efforts to prevent the duplication and to increase synergy between them must be increased.

In 2005, special attention will be paid to streamlining OSCE relations with the Council of Europe, whose activities are very much complementary to the Organization's activities in the human dimension of security. A special importance is attached to co-operation with the United Nations. Chairmanship will strive to continue the work from last year on harmonizing the traditional biannual resolution on co-operation between the UN and the OSCE, as well as on strengthening co-operation with UNECE in the area of economic and environmental activities.

Non-governmental organizations and civil society in general have increasingly important roles in the OSCE's operations. The Chairmanship will continue to promote their role in implementing OSCE norms and standards.