



ADDRESS

**by the OSCE Chairman-in-Office Dr Dimitrij Rupel
on OSCE Action in Kyrgyzstan
Vienna, 30 May 2005**

Mr. President, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to thank His Excellency Mr. Kurmanbek Bakiev, acting President of the Kyrgyz Republic, for his address to the Permanent Council today.

Mr. President, you have been entrusted with the leadership of your country at a critical and complex juncture in its history. The challenges facing Kyrgyzstan at this time are both diverse and manifold. Yet they also represent opportunities for the country to build security and stability based on the solid foundations of democracy, economic well being and the rule of law.

The OSCE has responded quickly to developments in your country, and remains at the forefront of international efforts to ensure stability in Kyrgyzstan. Recent events in the wider Central Asian region have put the importance of a continued commitment to Kyrgyzstan into stark perspective.

The upcoming Presidential elections on 10 July will mark a crucial step in Kyrgyzstan's further democratic development. The eyes of the world will be on this election, and I believe it represents a gateway to political stability based upon democratic development. Therefore, the Organization's priority is to help ensure that these elections take place in a secure and open political climate, and that the manner in which they are conducted is free and fair.

In this regard I am encouraged to see the key political players, in particular yourself and Mr. Kulov, engaging in constructive dialogue and genuinely working together for stability. I wish to commend you personally, Mr. President, for your contribution to this dialogue.

The Chairmanship, participating States, OSCE Institutions and the Centre in Bishkek have been actively involved in the assistance process in Kyrgyzstan within the framework of the Work Plan, approved by the Kyrgyz Government last month. My Personal Representative for Central Asia, Alojz Peterle, is currently in the country to discuss present and planned OSCE activities.

The OSCE Centre in Bishkek has prioritized 14 election assistance and conflict prevention projects that require implementation either before, during, or immediately after the Presidential election. Five priority tasks within interim police projects have been identified by the Centre, in consultation with the Strategic Police Matters Unit, as being urgently needed at this stage.

I stress that these projects address the immediate priorities and require immediate funding. The people and government of Kyrgyzstan face an urgent need of our assistance.

I would like to thank those Delegations which have already pledged funds to these OSCE initiatives and strongly encourage others to contribute, especially to the urgent short term activities related to police assistance.

I would like to mention that my own country has also contributed 20,000 EUR to a project on voter education in Kyrgyzstan.

Whilst I am pleased that immediate security for the citizens of Kyrgyzstan has, to a certain extent, been re-established, I continue to be concerned by the continued illegal occupation of land and administration buildings.

Let me also take this opportunity to comment about other events directly affecting Kyrgyzstan. It is my opinion that the asylum seekers currently on Kyrgyz territory must be treated according to the international commitments Kyrgyzstan has signed up to, specifically

the 1951 Convention related to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol. I believe that a forced return of these people would do nothing to appease an already tense situation.

Mr. President, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

All participating States appreciate that this is a critical time for Kyrgyzstan, and for Central Asia as a whole. This is also the time for the Organization to ensure it continues doing its utmost to support Kyrgyzstan as it becomes a full-fledged member of the democratic family of nations.

We have been asked to help, and we have to answer the call.

I believe an enhanced engagement of the OSCE will not only help to address the challenges currently facing the people of Kyrgyzstan, but will also demonstrate the Organization's continued relevance and commitment to the security of Central Asia and the wider OSCE region.

Thank you.