

STATEMENT BY THE CHAIRMAN OF THE FIRST REVIEW CONFERENCE ON THE
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE TREATY ON OPEN SKIES
AT THE CLOSING PLENARY

Vienna, 16 February 2005

The States Parties to the Treaty on Open Skies, hereinafter referred to as the States Parties;
Fulfilling the obligation set forth in Article XVI, paragraph 3, of the Treaty on Open Skies,
hereinafter referred to as the Treaty, to conduct a review of the implementation of the Treaty;
Reaffirming the decisions of the Open Skies Consultative Commission;
Having met at the First Review Conference, chaired by the Federal Republic of Germany,
from 14 to 16 February 2005 in Vienna;

Have reached common understanding on the following:

- 1 - The Treaty is an important legally binding agreement that significantly enhances openness and transparency among its States Parties and thus contributes to maintaining a climate of co-operation on their territories from Vancouver to Vladivostok. The Treaty significantly contributes to achieving the goals and objectives of the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), in particular the promotion of confidence, stability and security in Europe. The States Parties remain committed to the full implementation of the Treaty.
- 2 - The negotiation, conclusion, ratification and implementation of the Treaty took place in times of change during which the European security environment was evolving significantly. New states have emerged as well as new risks and challenges to security. In this period of transition the Treaty has been a stabilising factor.
- 3 - The time elapsing between the Treaty's signature and its entry into force was effectively used by the States Parties to prepare for the implementation of the Treaty after its ratification. The States Parties established national procedures for the implementation of the Treaty, selected and equipped Open Skies observation aircraft and conducted numerous trial, test, certification and demonstration missions.
- 4 - Trial observation flights conducted in the period of provisional application demonstrated the Treaty's utility in facilitating verification and confidence building. Several of these missions demonstrated the Treaty's potential in the fields of conflict prevention, crisis management and post conflict rehabilitation as well as environmental monitoring.

5 - The bilateral Open Skies agreement between Hungary and Romania concluded prior to the Treaty's entry into force has confirmed the feasibility of regional application.

6 - Since the entry into force of the Treaty, the States Parties have conducted a considerable number of observation flights. The implementation of the Treaty in a spirit of cooperation and trust has proved its relevance and viability and contributed to the creation of openness and transparency in a dynamic security environment.

7 - The States Parties also note with appreciation that the OSCC, being the formal permanent body of the Treaty, has in the true meaning of cooperation constructively resolved numerous organisational, legal and technical issues related to Treaty implementation. OSCC Informal Working Groups have dealt with issues associated with certification of observation aircraft, rules of procedure, sensors, notification formats, flight rules and procedures. The States Parties recognize the need for the OSCC to address and consider further action on these implementation-related issues.

8 - Recalling that the variety of sensor categories provided for in the Treaty could substantially improve its application, the States Parties reaffirm their intention to facilitate use of all sensor categories provided for in the Treaty. The States Parties note with interest activities that are intended to provide the Open Skies community with scientific and technical data and to share experiences with regard to testing and evaluation of thermal infrared sensor systems. The States Parties recognize that several documents on sensors need to be updated by the Informal Working Group on Sensors, in particular to facilitate timely certification for all categories of sensors covered by the Treaty. To this end, they welcome the recent Decision of the OSCC to resume the work of this Informal Working Group.

9 - The States Parties discussed aspects of quota distribution, recognizing that effective January 1, 2006, 100 percent of active quotas will be available for distribution. The States Parties agreed that the Open Skies mechanism of quota distribution should reflect the principles of equity, reciprocity and cooperation, and that the OSCC may further review this mechanism after January 2006.

10 - The successful implementation of the Treaty has enabled the States Parties to consider the possibility of realizing the potential utility of the Treaty as described in its Preamble, while maintaining its primary purpose of enhancing confidence and security. The States Parties recall that the OSCC may facilitate extraordinary observation flights over the territory of a State Party, with its consent, on request from those bodies of the OSCE authorised to deal with conflict prevention and crisis management, and from other relevant international organisations. Proposals by States Parties for the use of the Open Skies regime in specific additional fields, such as the environment, may be raised for consideration in the OSCC. The States Parties note that during the Treaty's period of provisional application cooperative aerial observation missions were successfully conducted in the area of environmental disaster monitoring as well as in the fields of conflict prevention and crisis management in the OSCE-area and beyond. States Parties appreciate the discussions on possible environmental and ecological applications of the Open Skies regime that took place at seminars conducted under the auspices of the OSCC and recognize the potential value of further discussions in the OSCC.

11 - The States Parties recognize that the Treaty might serve as a model for aerial surveillance regimes in other regions of the world in order to promote security and stability. They are prepared to enter into dialogue with interested parties in order to share experience, to exchange general information about the Treaty and its benefits and to provide support and advice on cooperative aerial observation.

12 - The States Parties look forward to future contributions the Treaty will make to security from Vancouver to Vladivostok and they expect that the second Review Conference will find the Treaty to be a continued success in terms of its full implementation.

13 - In accordance with Article XVI, paragraph 3, the States Parties look forward to gathering again in five years' time at the Second Conference to review the implementation of the Treaty on Open Skies.

The States Parties note with satisfaction that to date 32 OSCE participating States are Parties to the Treaty.

In addition, most States Parties appreciate that since its entry into force six OSCE participating States, namely Sweden, Finland, Latvia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Slovenia and Croatia have acceded to the Treaty, thereby supporting its principles, goals and objectives, Estonia and Lithuania have been approved by the OSCC for accession, while the application of Cyprus remains on the agenda of the Open Skies Consultative Commission (OSCC).