

Speech by H.E. Jaap de Hoop Scheffer, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands and Chairman-in-Office of the OSCE, at the 12th Annual Session of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, Rotterdam, 5 July 2003

HALFWAY BETWEEN PORTO AND MAASTRICHT

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

- Welcome to the twelfth Annual Session of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly. I am honoured to be here, and to have this opportunity to address some two hundred and fifty members of parliament from most of the OSCE's participating States.
- Earlier this year, the press was reporting that the Dutch Chairmanship has set a brisk pace since taking the helm of the Organisation. It's true that I think we must move ahead at full speed, because we have quite a bit of work to do. In fact so much that we have to share this workload across the entire OSCE community. That means passing some of it on to you, in your capacity as members of the Parliamentary Assembly. But also to friends and colleagues in national governments and in Vienna, at the OSCE institutions and at its missions, at universities and in think tanks, in other international organisations and in NGOs. We share our ideas and strategies with you in the firm conviction that it will take a joint effort by all of us to make sure that the OSCE goes on flourishing in the future. And I am here today to report to you on our Chairmanship and its role in this joint endeavour.
- The results of our Chairmanship will be presented at the OSCE Ministerial in Maastricht on the first and second of December. The outcome of the Maastricht Ministerial will, to a very large extent, reflect the tasks that Ministers identified for us in Porto.
- Given the spectacular changes in the security landscape and emergence of new threats and challenges, Maastricht will set the agenda for the future of the OSCE. We are discussing threats to security and stability in the twenty-first century knowing full well that we can only see a few years ahead of us. So we are grateful for the new mechanism of the Annual Security Review Conference, which will allow us to regularly review progress in this field. In Maastricht we will adopt a number of specific strategy documents and

action plans: new threats, new economic strategy, review of field missions and peacekeeping.

REPOSITIONING THE OSCE

- The theme of this session – ‘The Role of the OSCE in the New Architecture of Europe’ - is well chosen because it touches on two developments that make it necessary for us to reposition the OSCE. Firstly, EU and NATO enlargement, and secondly, the new threats confronting the OSCE.
- As for the new threats confronting the OSCE-area, they are dynamic and complex. It is clear that, in the last few years, we have come face to face with unprecedented challenges and threats to our security. This is most obvious when it comes to terrorism, a threat that has become highly visible since September 11th, 2001. But there are other major threats, perhaps less visible and more surreptitious, such as organised crime, trafficking and illegal migration. And the OSCE should also be concerned about undemocratic responses to these new threats, responses such as intolerance, xenophobia, or curtailment of democratic and human rights. They too pose a challenge to human security and undermine the open character of society. Both the threats and the responses directly affect the security situation within and between nations and populations. The OSCE, thanks to its history and mandate, is in a very good position to reflect on these issues and come up with both short and long-term remedies.
- Intensified cooperation within the organisation might also help the OSCE to do its work in a coherent and transparent way. The chairmanship has met with the secretariat, the institutions and the Parliamentary Assembly to intensify our coordination activities.

BALANCE AND DIMENSIONS

- From the outset, the Netherlands has made an effort to strike a balance in the OSCE: a balance between the dimensions and a geographical balance. Giving more, and more visible, attention to military matters and other first-dimension security issues fits into our Chairmanship’s priority of better balancing the three OSCE dimensions. This is to be achieved by raising the level of activity in the political and security dimension and in the economic and environmental dimension up to the level of the human dimension. That applies to headquarters and policymaking, as well as operational activities on the ground.

The aim is not in any way to diminish our important work with regard to the human dimension but to do justice to the comprehensive concept of security that the OSCE stands for. The three-dimensional approach should pervade the programs of the Organisation wherever it is active.

- We have already begun shifting more emphasis to the economic and environmental dimension. The challenge still at hand is to streamline the many ideas and suggestions put forward, in order to finalise the New Strategy Document. The Chairmanship is pleased that so many parties want to contribute, including delegations, UNECE and the EBRD.
- Moving to the fight against trafficking in all its forms, the proposals that I introduced at the Economic Forum in Prague last May will be further developed in the coming months. More specifically, the Netherlands will continue its discussions with other delegations on the proposal to establish a Special Mechanism for the combat against trafficking: it is necessary to keep the fight against trafficking on the agenda. This can be done by strictly overseeing, and promoting, the implementation of Action Plan combating Trafficking, to be adopted by the month.
- The human dimension remains also high on the agenda. This year, our theme is tolerance and non-discrimination. Within this area, we have selected three topics for a full-day discussion at the HDIM meeting: 1. Prevention of Discrimination, Racism, Xenophobia and Anti-Semitism; 2. National Minorities; and 3. Migrant Workers. The Roma and Sinti Action Plan will be discussed as well. Let me mention a few other subjects and meetings, like the Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting on Roma and Sinti in April, which was very well attended by NGOs. The Anti-Semitism Conference, last month in Vienna, made headlines almost throughout the OSCE area. Still ahead of us is the Conference on Anti-Racism, Discrimination and Xenophobia and the Seminar on Human Rights and Combating Terrorism to be held in the Netherlands. Each of these subjects is important in its own right, and they are relevant to all of the OSCE's participating States, East and West of Vienna, thus also contributing to geographical balance.

INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS AND NGOS

- Coordination and cooperation between the OSCE and other organisations such as the Council of Europe, the EU and the UN, is as vital as ever, both in terms of policy-setting and where regional matters are concerned.
- The Chairmanship strongly supports close cooperation between the OSCE and NGOs. A meeting was held on May 12th in Vienna with major international NGOs interested in conflict resolution and human rights. One recommendation emerging from that event was that NGOs should have a greater role in OSCE meetings. We plan to invite selected NGOs to Maastricht, so that they can present their views in the margins of the Ministerial. In the Netherlands, the Chairmanship is working together closely with the Netherlands Helsinki Committee and other groups to prepare for two Round Table Conferences later this year in The Hague, one 'on human rights and combating terrorism' and another on 'new minorities'.

REGIONAL ISSUES

- I have made Moldova one of the Organisation's top priorities for 2003. In March, Moldovan and Transdnestrian negotiators agreed to establish a joint commission to draft a new constitution for a reunified Moldova on a federal model before end of the year. There is still much negotiation ahead on the type and form of the federation, but I would like to take this opportunity to stress that this is the only feasible solution. I urge all parties involved to keep the momentum going and find a timely political solution for the Transdnestrian issue. It is crucial for parties to take an attitude of cooperation and compromise. The seminar organised by the Parliamentary Assembly in Moldova was of the utmost importance to this process, and was an excellent illustration of how your Assembly and other OSCE institutions can compliment and support each other.
- The political negotiations are focusing on 'security guarantees' for a political settlement, but post-settlement arrangements also need attention. The two parties are proceeding on the understanding that a peacekeeping operation may be in place during the transitional period. We are currently consulting on this issue. The assumption of the chair is that the Peace Consolidation Force will be multinational, composed of troops from participating States and it must be acceptable to both parties.
- A joint OSCE team has visited Moscow to discuss a number of proposed projects that could form the basis of a future programme of technical cooperation with Chechnya. The

discussions with government officials took place in a constructive atmosphere. The overall assessment is that we are broadly on track towards developing a long-term cooperation programme, there is more work yet to be done, while the situation on the ground continues to give reason for grave concern.

- Central Asia has been a priority of mine. We successfully advocated shifting more funds in the 2003 budget to the OSCE's activities in Central Asia. We intend to continue this trend next year. As regards the Organisation's increased involvement in Central Asia, the Chairmanship favours a constructive, balanced approach, which properly covers all three dimensions. As a signal of my commitment I have appointed Mr Martti Ahtisaari, the former President of Finland, as my Personal Envoy for Central Asia, who already visited the region already twice.
- I visited Turkmenistan last March and I will leave the Netherlands tomorrow to visit Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan. My aim is to promote political dialogue within and between the countries. In each country, authorities need to be encouraged to actively seek dialogue with the opposition and civil society and to promote transparency and accountability in governance.
- Finally on regional matters: the Caucasus, a region of primary concern, which remains also an area of unresolved conflicts. We hope that upcoming elections may lead to opportunities for new initiatives.

CLOSING SECTION

- What we want to do in Maastricht is show that this Organisation is making real progress – progress in an operational sense – in addressing the concerns identified in Porto. For our part, the Chairmanship would like to be measured by its success in leading this Organisation into new, concrete action, rather than its success in adopting some document. It is our *acquis* that unites us, and that *acquis* needs to be given new life every day, across all three of the OSCE's dimensions, to bring human security to all of our people.

Distinguished members of the Parliamentary Assembly,

- I wish you a successful conference and hope that you may arrive at practical and focused recommendations for the OSCE to act on. The challenges that we face are many and urgent. We cannot take on every challenge. But those that we do take on should be approached with professionalism and without delay. Your work as members of parliament is of crucial importance to meeting these challenges successfully. I call upon you to share with us your thoughts and ideas on these important issues. Your insights and recommendations are of the utmost importance. They help to keep the OSCE relevant and, what is more important, in touch with the people of its participating States.
- This concludes my report on the activities of the OSCE Chairmanship in the first half of this year. Due to time constraints, I could do no more than touch on the main issues. I would be happy to hear your comments and questions.