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**Address by H.E. Dimitrij Rupel, Ph.D., Chairman-in-Office of the OSCE,
at the Permanent Council, 13 January 2005**

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is an honor to address this meeting of the Permanent Council in my capacity as Chairman-in-Office of the OSCE.

Before I begin with OSCE issues, I would like to say that the recent disaster in the Indian Ocean puts into perspective the challenges that we face in the OSCE area. The relief effort displays the potential that can be brought together by co-operation, goodwill and multilateralism to even most daunting tasks. We should bear this in mind when addressing the issues on our agenda at the beginning of this year.

Good co-ordination and cooperation is not only necessary, but a precondition to addressing complex and urgent tasks. I want to use my role as Chairman in office this year to stress co-ordination and deepen cooperation between all 55 participating States of the OSCE. As I said during my recent visit to Ukraine, the OSCE is as much Slovenian, as it is Ukrainian, Russian, American, French, German, British, Italian, Hungarian, and so on. At the Sofia Ministerial Council Foreign Minister Solomon Passy quite literally passed me a baton, which is indeed fitting because the Chairmanship of the OSCE is like a relay race. However, I want to stress that the Chairmanship will and can do only as much as its 55 participating States want it to do. It is only through cooperation and good will that we will achieve the progress necessary, and tackle the outstanding challenges that still burden our Organization.

Success this year will depend on *your* initiatives, *your* political will, and *your* decisions.

Having said this, allow me to outline what I think will be the biggest challenge for the OSCE, and as such our priority in 2005. I call it the **Triple R agenda**: Revitalize, Reform, and Rebalance.

Revitalize the OSCE

One of Slovenia's first priorities will be to broker an agreement on a budget and scales. Considerable progress was made on the scales last year, and I compliment my Bulgarian colleagues for their work. We should now wrap up this discussion and move ahead.

The OSCE is an organization that offers good value for money. The OSCE is effective and in many cases unique in the tasks it performs. We should strive to make our organization financially sound — i.e. close the loopholes, and perhaps refocus our spending, paying particular attention to the relationship between financial expansion and mission relevancy — however there is no alternative to funding it. If we believe in the OSCE, we must find appropriate funds for it.

We should also give the OSCE the resources that it requires to carry out decisions that we have taken. Failure to do so calls into question our commitment to the OSCE, and more importantly our integrity and security.

It is truly unfortunate that we do not have an agreement on a budget for the year in which we will be celebrating the 30th anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act, 60th anniversary of the end of the

Second World War, 15th anniversary of the Paris Charter for a New Europe, the 10th anniversary of the OSCE and the 10th anniversary of the Dayton Accords. We needed an agreement on the budget yesterday, we need it today; I would like to have it as soon as possible.

Reform the OSCE

Obviously and quite evidently, the OSCE is faced with new security, political and economic challenges, which are putting new pressures on the organization. The organization needs to be reformed; particularly in terms of redefining some of our priorities, refocusing our efforts, and strengthening the relationship between the Secretariat and the Chairmanship(s). The Secretariat has been and continues to be the backbone of the organization, and it is my intent to work with the Secretary General, Mr. Jan Kubis, to find an appropriate voice for the Secretary General—one which will allow the OSCE to better respond and shift resources to emergency situations. I trust that the Secretary General, drawing on his long experience, is in the best position to initiate this important task.

Pursuant to a decision taken at the Sofia Ministerial, I also intend to appoint a panel of eminent persons to look at strengthening the effectiveness of the OSCE. My thanks go to those participating States which have put forward their candidates.

Last but not least, missions are the jewel in the crown of the OSCE and we should make every effort to ensure that they maintain their effectiveness. The OSCE would also benefit from clearer rules of procedure, and I hope that these rules can be finalized before the Ministerial Council in Ljubljana.

Rebalance the OSCE

Ladies and Gentlemen; the OSCE is a three-dimensional organization. I am sympathetic to the view of those who believe that we should dedicate more attention and resources to the politico-military, economic and environmental, and human dimensions of security.

The agenda for political-military activities has been set in large part by decisions taken at Maastricht and Sofia. The main guidance comes from the OSCE Strategy to Address Threats to Security and Stability in the Twenty-First Century. Pursuant to the Strategy and decisions taken at the recent Ministerial Councils we need to continue our efforts in combating terrorism and tackle problems of surplus of conventional ammunition, small arms and light weapons.

The changes in the security environment have influenced development of military doctrines. Let us consider possibilities to intensify our discussions in that regard. The Forum for Security Cooperation, which plays an indispensable role in the work of our Organization, has to be fully associated with activities in this field.

In accordance with the decision taken at the recent Ministerial Council, we need to complete the elaboration of a border security and management concept. I believe that this concept could also be well complemented by input from our operational border-related activities. Slovenia attaches special importance to cross border cooperation in the context of border management and security.

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

Our work in the economic and environmental dimension must be strengthened. We are open for consideration of new initiatives in this area, like for instance the proposal to convene a conference on energy security.

At the same time our commitment to the human dimension must remain. The human dimension is at the core of the OSCE activities, and we can not afford to erode our common principles and commitments.

For example, we should build on the work on tolerance and non-discrimination completed in 2004. Three personal representatives have been appointed and are beginning their work.

Trafficking in human beings remains a concern and the OSCE has developed considerable expertise in anti-trafficking that should be fully utilized. This year we will pay added attention to the special needs of child victims of trafficking.

At Sofia we committed ourselves to further developing the OSCE activities in regard to migration. Migration and integration will be one of the main themes of Slovenia's Chairmanship, and is directly related to themes like cross-border security management and human trafficking.

Ladies and Gentlemen; I was concerned at the tone of some remarks at Sofia, and the lack of consensus on some issues since then. I hope that during our Chairmanship we shall bridge the divide and address the discontent. We must work together to prevent political fault lines from reappearing.

The OSCE is an inclusive, co-operative security organization. What we have in common is much greater than the points on which we differ. We need to build on that common ground to tackle challenges to security that affect us all.

I believe that Slovenia is well placed to forge a common sense of purpose. We are at the heart of the OSCE area. We are new members of NATO and the EU, a promoter of stability and co-operation in Central and Eastern Europe, good friends of the countries East and West of Slovenia and strong defenders of multilateralism.

Indeed, it was no accident that Slovenia was the site of the first Summit meeting between Presidents Bush and Putin in June 2001 at Brdo. I hope that under Slovenia's Chairmanship, the spirit of co-operation so evident at that meeting in Brdo will guide our work this year and lead to a successful Ministerial Council in Ljubljana.

Taking Pragmatic Steps for Building Peace

Ladies and Gentlemen; there are a number of country-specific and regional issues that Slovenia's Chairmanship is looking at with special interest.

We have no magic solutions, but we feel that targeted and pragmatic steps can contribute to thawing frozen conflicts, consolidating peace-building processes, and supporting democratization.

The OSCE's election monitoring and reporting were crucial in highlighting irregularities that then led to a repeat of the second round of the Presidential elections in Ukraine. The more than one thousand election monitors who spent the Christmas period in Ukraine made up the largest election monitoring operation in our Organization's history. I believe that the reports and

activities of the OSCE's election monitoring mission in Ukraine were essential in restoring the faith in the integrity of the democratic system in Ukraine.

Expectations are now high for what comes next. As I said during my visit to Ukraine last week, I believe that the OSCE and Ukraine have a good opportunity to strengthen co-operation across a range of issues including freedom of the media, national minorities, democratization, the political-military dimension and regional security. This opportunity should not be missed.

Another priority for Slovenia's Chairmanship in 2005 will be to consolidate work that has been done in the Balkans. The OSCE should take advantage of its regional coverage, and promote solutions to issues with regional significance. It should also concentrate on its strengths and target its activities and resources where they can have the highest impact. In celebration and affirmation of the 30th anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act, I am thinking in particular of issues such as refugee return, protection of national minorities, capacity building – particularly the judiciary and police – as well as elections.

Kosovo will be another major issue in 2005. The OSCE is a key player in Kosovo. OMiK is by far our biggest mission. We spend around 20% of our budget there. In short, 2005 review of the standards may influence the consideration of future status of Kosovo and therefore means a big investment for the OSCE.

It is clear to me that the OSCE should be actively involved in the standards review process and any re-structuring of the international presence in Kosovo. This is a message that I stressed during my visit to Priština earlier this week, and it is one I will continue to make with your support throughout the year.

In the Caucasus I see some grounds for optimism. The OSCE has long been involved in seeking a solution to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and should re-double its efforts this year to help thaw this frozen conflict. Meetings of the Foreign Ministers of Armenia and Azerbaijan in the Prague format have re-vitalized the Minsk process. The fact-finding mission scheduled to examine first hand the situation in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan at the end of this month should be viewed as a step forward from which we should build further momentum.

In Georgia, the conflict around South Ossetia should be high on our agenda. The OSCE has a clear mandate and our presence is established. We will continue to facilitate the political process and to support de-militarization as agreed by the parties. Confidence-building and economic rehabilitation should be part of a concerted approach to bring sustainable peace to this long-troubled region of Georgia.

In Abkhazia we should continue to support the UN-led settlement process. Hopefully recent developments will accelerate the negotiation process and promote the establishment of a joint UN-OSCE Human Rights Office in the Gali region which could also contribute to a return of the displaced population.

Like many others, I regret that the mandate of the Border Monitoring Operation was not extended. The BMO has been a vital confidence-building measure in a volatile region. It demonstrates the OSCE's growing border-related capabilities. Indeed, it is one of the most challenging operations that the OSCE has ever carried out in terms of the terrain and conditions under which OSCE staff have worked. I know that Georgia would like to have international assistance for border management and security and we should be receptive to the call.

In Moldova, the challenge this year is to get the process of dialogue back on track. There are a range of issues that hinder the achievement of a lasting settlement. Slovenia will do its best to facilitate dialogue among the parties and with all of those that have an interest in a peaceful and integrated Moldova.

In 2005 I would like to focus our activities in Central Asia on a number of issues: Speaking in a broad sense, I see a need for greater action to control migration, promote human rights education, strengthen human security, and increase border management and security cooperation, including in the fields of de-mining and human trafficking. I also believe that we should deepen our efforts to assist the governments in Central Asia in their democratization processes, particularly in relation to elections.

Working with Others

Our work does not take place in a vacuum. Just as the OSCE is evolving, so too are other organizations and the world in which we must all work. It is important that we work with regional and sub-regional organizations, and the civil society, in order to make most effective use of our respective strengths and capabilities. In 2005, special attention will be paid to streamlining our relations with the Council of Europe.

Slovenia expressed its interest in Chairing the OSCE already at the Istanbul Summit in 1999. The Foreign Minister at that time was Dr. Frlec, who now heads the Chairmanship Task Force in Ljubljana. I know that he, and the Chairman of the Permanent Council, Ambassador Lenarcic together with their teams, will ably support me in providing the necessary leadership of the OSCE over the next year.

I also rely on the support and co-operation of the Secretary General who will have a clearer and stronger mandate. I look forward to working with Jan Kubis in his remaining months, and have already begun – in earnest – the process of selecting his successor. We can not lose time on this process.

I look forward to working with my Troika colleagues, Heads of Institution and Heads of Mission, all of whom I will meet over the next two days. Let me at this point emphasize the importance of the Parliamentary Assembly, particularly its role in election observation. I hope that during my mandate we would be able to enhance our cooperation and use the synergy of all the branches of the OSCE.

In 2004 Slovenia was an active supporter of deepening the Organization's partnership with our Mediterranean and Asian Partners. I believe that we should build on last year's positive experience in Afghanistan and consider ways to further strengthen our practical cooperation including with Mongolia. I support the initiative of my predecessor to request the Secretariat and ODIHR to send an assessment team to the Palestinian territories, and I look forward to the team's report. I believe such target operations—i.e. making the OSCE expertise available to others — are in the interest of us all.

Ladies and Gentlemen; this is an exciting year to be chairing the OSCE. As we enter **the fourth decade** since the signing of the Helsinki Final Act, the OSCE is more than ever in the spotlight. There is a healthy debate about our future, many of challenges for us to work on together, and there will be numerous occasions for us to reflect on a rich past and a promising future.

Let us use the OSCE for an open exchange of views on common issues, without obstructing the common path.

Let us stand up for common principles, without losing sight of our co-operative spirit.

Let us make effective use of our resources, without undercutting our capabilities.

Slovenia takes the helm of this ship in choppy seas. We have no illusions that we can calm the waves, but I hope, under our stewardship, we will be able to guide the OSCE through troubled waters and contribute to the process that is of such importance to us all – building security through co-operation in Europe.

Thank you for your attention.