

Speech by Dr. Kass, Director-General “Federal Border Police“, at the Second Annual Security Review Conference of the OSCE

Key-note speech, Session 2

Ladies and gentlemen

Thank you very much for inviting me to the OSCE’s Second Annual Security Review Conference and the opportunity to shed light on an issue – border protection – which is important to all of us. I am going to look into this matter from a German point of view. Protecting external borders is becoming ever more important. And this applies to all European states. An old and basic border protection philosophy says “domestic security of a state starts with and from its very frontiers”. This principle above all has a great impact on the enlarged European Community, since internal border controls will have largely been

abolished in the foreseeable future and free, unchecked movement of individuals and goods will be part of everyday life almost all over Europe. As a result, protecting the external borders in the European Union will be of utmost importance.

Let me start my speech with a short threat assessment; of course I am well aware of the general unpredictability of what will exactly happen in the future:

1. Given the rapid population growth, above all in Asia and Africa, and the poor economic prospects and unfavourable living conditions in relevant countries, uncontrolled migratory flows to Europe will probably increase.
2. Compared with its neighbours, European states will remain “islands of prosperity” in the foreseeable future and hence continue to attract organised cross-border crime.
3. The abolition of internal border controls has already created and will create a single geographical crime region

from the North Cape to Sicily, and soon from the Black Sea to the Mid-Atlantic Ocean. With a view to maintaining public order and security in this region, a large number of diversely structured and organised authorities are doing their job there. This great diversity results in overlapping competencies and in communication problems. This situation is exacerbated by different political approaches and strategies in fighting crime. Organised criminal groups operating all over Europe are taking advantage of this situation.

4. International, i.e. cross-border, terrorism is increasing and requires effective and targeted defence measures starting with entry controls.

It is not only European Union member states but all states in Europe which are affected by these types of crime to a greater or lesser extent.

At the same time, however, this fact also opens up the political chance of establishing successful Europe-wide counter-measures: For it is not only Germany's citizens but also those living in our European neighbouring states who follow the development of domestic security in their states very attentively – sometimes even with great concern.

In order to counteract these current and future threats effectively, the Federal Border Police has developed new strategies. The basic idea underlying these strategies is as simple as it is effective. Cross-border crime can only be combated by cross-border co-operation.

The Federal Border Police, i.e. the German police force of the Federal Government, has considerably strengthened and intensified its co-operation with European Union member states but also with other states in Eastern Europe.

Our border police co-operation relies on two pillars:

- Multinational cooperation
- Bilateral cooperation.

The multinational approach can be expressed in terms of the “European Border Police”. As you will surely be aware, Germany has made a crucial contribution to this project. With the decision on setting up a European Border Police Agency by 1 January 2005, the second important security agency of the European Union will be established – in addition to EUROPOL. Its task will be to coordinate, accompany and at a later stage evaluate activities of the national border police authorities. The intention is to harmonise the training of border police officers across the EU, and joint equipment will be purchased. The agency will prepare up-to-date situation reports and plan joint operations.

The “Centre for Land Borders” which forms part of my Directorate-General and which will operate under the European Border Police Agency in early 2005 has already carried out 12 mixed operations since October 2002. Officers from all EU states and the former candidate countries worked together at focus points of external EU land borders for weeks. These types of practical border police cooperation will now also be extended to airports and to the surveillance of sea regions, above all in the Mediterranean. These joint operations will be the nucleus of future border police cooperation. Political targets will hence be put into practice and multinational forms of co-operation strengthened and intensified.

In bilateral terms, the Federal Border Police has implemented a large package of measures which I would like to outline to you briefly:

The service of German police officers at airports and sea harbours in Italy and Spain at trouble spots of illegal migration

in Italy and Spain since 2001 has meanwhile become part of everyday life. The same applies to joint patrols on the railway route between Munich and Bozen with Austrian, Italian and German police officers. Joint patrols have also been regularly instituted with Polish officers since 1998 and with our Czech colleagues since last year.

In a large number of European countries – in Moscow and Tiflis/Georgia in the East – the Federal Border Police has deployed border police liaison officers. This network will be expanded further. The officers have proved to be the guarantor of fast and proactive information exchange. Of course, they also keep in touch with the Federal Ministry of the Interior and their respective partner authority.

Above all the Federal Border Police supports nearly all central and eastern European states, in particular Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Slovenia, Bulgaria, and Romania in setting up democratically structured border police organisations within the

framework of EU Phare Twinning Projects. The projects in Poland, Hungary, Slovenia and the Czech Republic have largely been completed. The projects in Bulgaria and Romania are on schedule.

Assistance in training and equipment supplements these programmes. Numerous members of border police organisations of Central and Eastern European countries are given advanced training year after year in Germany. Since last year seminar participants from Poland, Hungary, Rumania, Bulgaria as well as Georgia have attended regular career training measures for the higher intermediate and higher service for police officers in Germany.

Since 2001 new tasks have been set in the Western Balkan, one of the major routes for the smuggling of persons and of goods, and for the trafficking in drugs. Under the stability pact for South East Europe, German border police officers, together with Austrian and Slovenian advisors, have been assisting Croatia as partner in rendering its border police organisation

and the asylum and migration regime more effectively. And as from this year Bosnia and Herzegovina and presumably Serbia are being supported or will be supported in setting up efficient border police organisations based on Western regimes.

Ladies and gentlemen

With this meeting the OSCE has taken up an issue to which, as I have already pointed out, the Federal Government attaches the greatest political importance and where Germany has already shown great bilateral commitment in the recent past.

Since its foundation in 1974, the OSCE has committed itself to securing peace on our continent and to promoting co-operation among the states of Europe: It has hence contributed to overcoming the division of Europe. The consequences of sweeping political changes in the early nineties of last century equally affect the East and the West, in other words they affect nearly all walks of life and organisation forms of our states. This

applies to the Federal Border Police which has become more European over the last years, and this also applies to all partner organisations in the OSCE field. At the same time I consider this statement extraordinarily important, although it sounds quite natural to us in the year 2004, to be. For who would have thought, 15 years ago, that the Border Police College in Lübeck would for instance train senior staff from Russia and Romania in the technology of border security? And who would have thought, 15 years ago, that federal border police officers would, as welcome guests, assist their colleagues in Poland or Bulgaria in building up their border protection regime? With these examples I wish to remind us all of Europe's rapid development and, as a result, its domestic security. That is in an area where national sovereignty, sovereign action but also former reflexes of secrecy and systematic isolation are directly affected. The breath-taking speed of this development will last – of that I am sure.

The OSCE makes its contribution to this development: In accordance with the Ministerial Council of Maastricht it will draw up border protection strategies and submit them to the upcoming Ministerial Council in Sofia at the end this year. From our point of view, the following aspects should be considered in this respect:

- A border police should clearly be based on police aspects. The military shape which it used to have in some cases in the past should be replaced by a civilian, that is basic police orientation.
- High-performing, efficient and effective police organisations should be set up. They should have the necessary modern equipment so as to be able to fight successfully against groups of criminal perpetrators which sometimes dispose of state-of-the-art technology.
- The internal constitution, mentality and structure of border police organisations must be democratic; leadership,

respect for human rights should be mentioned here as key words; the pay of civil servants must not aid corruption.

- Border police organisations must be reasonably embedded into the security structure of a given country. This means that overlapping tasks, double or even chaotic competencies must be avoided. In this context let me refer to the positive experience we have had and are still having with the independence of the border police in Germany; against the backdrop of special qualifications and experience required of our staff an independent type of organisation is commendable.
- Above all, border police organisations must be lined-up internationally; as I have already said, no country in Europe will be able to meet the challenges of cross-border crime on its very own; only the closest and really trustful cooperation with the respective neighbours and with the European authorities will lead to success; primarily the right mental understanding must be aroused in this field, that is the service any border police officer provides in

Europe, irrespective of the uniform he or she wears, protects his own country but also Europe as a whole, and the protection he or she grants Europe will be returned by his or her colleagues, for instance in Portugal or Norway.

My wish is that these ideas be reflected in the strategy paper developed by you.

Germany will not refuse to render you assistance in your work. With the officers Mr Schumm and Mr Karohl the Federal Government has seconded two excellent experts. In addition, we have financed several fact-finding missions. We will make our contribution to successful work also in the future.

At the end of my speech and in summary let me highlight once again the importance of the security of our borders to our respective people but also to Europe as a whole. And let me combine it with an appeal to all states participating in this conference to meet this challenge actively and to equip their

border police organisation with the necessary financial, material and financial resources which they will need for successful work. International co-operation will have to be institutionalised, working practices and traditions followed so far must be reviewed and, where appropriate, adjusted. This all requires courage and prudence but above all comprehension – among staff but also in the top-level management of the relevant organisations. My deep interest is to support this – and hence I am looking forward to the discussion with great suspense.