



Speaking Points of
Ambassador Renatas Norkus, Chairperson of the Permanent Council

Ambassadorial Workshop within the Framework of the
Conflict Cycle – V to V Dialogue:
„Early Response to Crises and Emerging Conflicts”
Vienna, 20 September 2011

Ladies and Gentlemen,
Dear Colleagues,

Opening remarks

- I warmly welcome you to the ambassadorial workshop on „Early Response to Crises and Emerging Conflicts”. This is the fourth and final event in our planned series of V to V Dialogues on the conflict cycle.
- This is the moment when we should collectively take stock of what has been proposed and discussed since our first informal meeting at Ambassadors’ level on 15 March. More importantly, we should take this opportunity to decide on a way forward.
- Let me remind you that on 15 March we had a constructive and rich discussion which demonstrated that the conflict cycle remains at the core of the OSCE’s work. At the same time, there was widespread recognition that more needs to be done to strengthen the OSCE’s capacity throughout the entire conflict cycle. That is why meetings were held on early warning, post-conflict rehabilitation, mediation support and dialogue facilitation and, today, early response to crisis situations.
- As the result of these discussions a number of concrete actionable recommendations emerged which were reflected in the Chairmanship’s perceptions papers. Some of these suggestions might be taken up and implemented without formal political decisions, others - may require formal action.
- As you are well aware this Chairmanship would like to adopt a relevant Ministerial Council Decision properly reflecting the results of this work and

demonstrating our collective commitment to preserve and further strengthen the OSCE's role in preventing and managing crisis and conflict situations.

- Let me say that at this stage of our discussion the Chairmanship has a fairly clear idea on what main operative elements should be contained in the draft Ministerial Decision, as I believe you all do by consulting the Chairmanship's perception papers which were produced after each of expert meeting and workshop.
- To make our position clear, allow me to make the following observations:
- First, we believe that existing principles and mandates are fundamentally sound and basically sufficient for the OSCE to operate. We do not intend to change or modify them.
- Second, our primary target is **not** creation of new mechanisms, but rather polishing, strengthening and optimizing existing ones; we are looking at closing the gaps which we identified and streamlining procedures, **not** at inventing new mechanisms or proposing additional institutions. I repeat this once again: we are proposing to consider how we could do better the job which we are supposed to do or are already doing anyway.
- Third, our guiding principle is to seek to do better with existing resources by streamlining and re-allocating them as necessary. However, at the same time we should be honest and consequent in our effort: Should more resources still be needed we should be prepared for flexible solutions, as there is no universal guarantee of success "on the cheap".
- Finally, let me also recall that in this process we agreed to focus on those proposals and ideas which have a good chance of gathering the necessary level of consensus (and not engage on issues of controversy).
- Now I would like to turn to the theme of today's meeting, namely *Early response*.
- Early action is essential. Indeed, early warning is useless if not followed up by early action. And the sooner we respond, the less likely the chances of conflict. There are plenty of good examples from over the past two decades of how the OSCE has been the first mover in responding to warning signs. Sadly, there have also been a cases of when the warning signs were not heeded.
- On 12 of September the Chairmanship circulated a discussion paper on "*Reinforcing the OSCE capacity as regards early response to crisis and emerging conflicts*". Here I would like to express our sincere appreciation to Ambassador François Alabrune for his support in preparing this paper and to thank the CPC for their help in bringing together this meeting.
- Allow me to make a few comments on the Discussion paper. First of all we believe that this paper reflects our understanding on how we should approach

our task today and in general our common effort of strengthening and improving the OSCE's early response capacity.

- As you see from the paper we tried to provide a framework for today's discussion by delineating the main directions. You might appreciate ambitious yet realistic scope of the paper and balanced nature of problematic areas on which we invite you to focus today. I expect our Moderator to present it in more detail in few moments.
- I would like to extend my welcome and gratitude to Ambassador Janez Lenarčič, Director of the ODIHR and Ambassador Knut Vollebaek, OSCE High Commissioner who have graciously accepted our invitation to kick off our deliberations today. And I welcome CPC Director Ambassador Kobieracki who is today representing also the Secretary General. I'm confident that their active participation in our exchange will contribute greatly to its fruitful outcome.
- Without further occupying our precious time, let me thank you all for your attendance here today. I hope that we will have a constructive discussion that will generate pragmatic solutions.
- Dear Colleagues, my I appeal to you do not forget that we have gone through the process of more than two years: the series of discussions that this Chairmanship launched this year were preceded and indeed are based on the results of the 'Corfu Process' and Astana preparations and indeed mandated at the highest political level at the 2010 Astana Summit. Plenty of ideas have been generated. Now is the time to turn them into action as we'd reached a point when the time has come to test our political will.
- With that, it is my pleasure to give the floor to our esteemed moderator and colleague, Ambassador François Alabrune who has agreed to serve as moderator for today's event. And indeed I'm very much impressed by his commitment to further support the Chairmanship by acting as a Coordinator of the follow-up to this meeting.
- Before providing some concluding remarks or rather presenting Chairmanship's plans regarding our next steps, allow me to express my gratitude to gratitude to Ambassador Janez Lenarčič, Ambassador Knut Vollebaek and CPC Director Ambassador Kobieracki for their thoughtful and stimulating contribution to our constructive dialogue.

Closing remarks

- I would also like to thank the participating States as well as all other representatives for their attendance and their input, and for the ideas and initiatives that were voiced this morning.
- It goes without saying that our special thanks and appreciation go to François, the most able Moderator of today's meeting.

- As to the next steps, the Chairmanship will prepare, in a couple of weeks, a first draft of Ministerial Council Decision on enhancing OSCE capacities to address the “conflict cycle”. We believe such Draft should contain all *relevant* elements that come out from our discussions this year. Of course, the Chairmanship’s approach will be guided by a striving for a fair balance of interest and spirit of constructive consensus as well as realistic expectations.
- There is no need to repeat, that in our effort to prepare a solid draft paper we will be continuously aware of the process of discussions that we all were engaged in for the last couple of years.
- The Chairmanship envisions *one integrated* decision covering the main aspects of conflict cycle and in particular referring to early warning, early action, mediation support and dialogue facilitation and post-conflict rehabilitation.
- The Draft Decision might include the *preambular* elements and concrete *operative paragraphs*.
- In the process of preparing the Draft we will rely on a help and support of our Conflict Cycle Co-coordinators and Secretariat, in particular CPC.
- We hope to be able to circulate the first draft to the attention of 56 in the first half of October. Then Chairmanship would wish to hold an informal meeting to discuss the draft with the delegations. We do not exclude that there might be the need for holding more than just one such meeting before we would be ready to pass the draft to the Preparatory Committee.
- In concluding, let me again thank you for your contributions and support. The task we face is very important, and perhaps not the easy one, but we count on your support and good faith.

Thank you very much.