

Message from the Secretary General, Marc Perrin de Brichambaut

2005 was a pivotal year for the OSCE. We recalled the historic anniversary of the 1975 Helsinki Final Act and the 15th anniversary of the Charter of Paris for a New Europe. We broadened the range of our activities to better address contemporary challenges like organized crime, migration and intolerance. And decisions were taken to strengthen the OSCE's effectiveness for the future.

This is the first OSCE Annual Report that I have the pleasure to introduce as Secretary General. I regard it as an important showcase of the OSCE's work and a valuable means of reviewing and evaluating our activities. Through the Report the reader will form a good idea of the comprehensive range of the OSCE's work: politically, thematically and operationally.



The Annual Report demonstrates the diversity of the OSCE's work but also the inter-linkages between its core activities in security, human rights and development. On any given day, OSCE experts may be recycling toxic rocket fuel in, for example, Armenia, working with authorities to prevent human trafficking, training police or facilitating political dialogue in a sensitive crisis situation. As this Report illustrates, the OSCE is in action across a wide geographic area helping States to implement commitments designed to make Europe safer.

One of the OSCE's greatest strengths is its constructive engagement with participating States. When unexpected developments occur in the OSCE area, the Organization can respond quickly. This was evident in 2005 in Kyrgyzstan where the OSCE played a key role in reducing tensions and seeking co-operative solutions.

Another asset is the Organization's network of contacts. This year, partnership was strengthened with the Council of Europe and the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, while dialogue was intensified with the OSCE's Partners for Co-operation.

Operational flexibility and constructive partnership are vital in a world that requires effective multi-lateralism. Steps have been proposed to make the OSCE even more effective, and that will be one of the main challenges for 2006.

The OSCE is a community of values. Evolving challenges require a constant reminder of core principles, a review of the implementation of commitments and open dialogue. Terrorism, extremism, intolerance and alienation threaten international security and social cohesion. The OSCE is well-positioned to tackle some of the major challenges of our time, such as the relationship between counter-terrorism and human rights, integration in diverse societies and promoting a dialogue among civilizations. We need to contribute to the exchange of ideas on these crucial issues in order to strengthen security and co-operation in the OSCE area.