



Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

**Opening Statement by
the OSCE Secretary General,
Marc Perrin de Brichambaut,
at the 13th OSCE Ministerial Council Meeting**

Ljubljana, 5 December 2005

Thank you Mr. Chairman,

You and your team have done a lot to advance your objective of revitalizing, reforming and rebalancing the OSCE. Your leadership and dynamism have enabled the Organization to overcome a number of challenges, and have paved the way for a more focused and effective OSCE. Today's meeting will bear witness to this.

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

This has been a momentous year for the OSCE. The anniversary celebrations have reminded us of the historic importance of this Organization, while the debate on modernisation has opened our way towards the future.

We should all be proud of the OSCE's work, and what it stands for. The values of this Organization have stood the test of time, and it has continually displayed flexibility to deal with changing situations without sacrificing its core principles.

While our principles must remain steadfast, our techniques are evolving with the times. The OSCE can be regarded as a laboratory of ideas and instruments designed to generate effective ways for dealing with contemporary threats and challenges to security.

That does not mean constantly taking on new tasks. What is needed is innovation combined with a regular and sober assessment of our priorities and an adjustment of our resources and programmatic activities accordingly.

We should remain focused on our core activities like preventing armed conflict, protecting human rights, strengthening democracy and promoting economic liberty, social justice and environmental responsibility.

A priority should be the resolution of conflict and assistance in creating conditions for long-term peace and security. We should be prepared to step up our engagement in wherever there is a thaw in a frozen conflict or in order to help consolidate progress achieved through peaceful negotiation.

Recent events also demonstrate the need for paying more attention to integrating diversity and ensuring social cohesion in our cities and communities in the context of promoting tolerance and non-discrimination. These are issues relevant across the whole OSCE area, and not unique to any state or group of states.

Our approach should remain holistic and cross-dimensional. The link between human rights, security and development has been integral to the OSCE since the Helsinki Final Act and certainly since the Charter of Paris. We cannot afford any weak links in this chain.

We need to ensure internal cohesion. I look forward to continued close co-operation between all OSCE Institutions and field operations which are the means through which we project our joint engagement. In this way we help states to help themselves.

We should also be more assertive about getting our message across by working more closely with the media, civil society, NGOs and our international partners.

And we should continue to enhance our co-operation with our Partners for Co-operation in Asia and the Mediterranean, which have high expectations.

Excellencies,

The OSCE is as much a set of ideas as it is an organization. The *acquis* of our common commitments has created a community of values as well as a community of interests.

We are united by history and geography, but also by similar fundamental beliefs about how OSCE States should behave towards each other and in their internal affairs.

This is reflected in our common commitments which apply equally to all. We must therefore co-operate in an even-handed and constructive way to ensure the implementation of OSCE commitments which have been agreed to by consensus for the sake of collective peace and security.

In order to move ahead together, consensus requires compromise. While defending and promoting your national interests, I urge you to keep the broader interests of the OSCE in mind.

In the next two days you will take a number of decisions and make a number of statements that will further define and strengthen the OSCE's role. I wish us every success in these important efforts.

As Chief Administrative Officer of the OSCE I urge you to bear in mind that your decisions will often have resource implications. While maximizing efficiency we need to have the means to ensure that OSCE decisions can be implemented in a way that is adequate, measured, and sustainable. I therefore call on your continued support to provide sufficient funding for OSCE activities, both through the unified budget and extra-budgetary contributions.

Our success depends in large part on our human resources. We need to improve our efforts to attract and retain top quality staff. I would like to take this opportunity to salute the work of dedicated OSCE staff, and to thank those States which second personnel to this organization.

For my part, I intend to implement the mandate agreed upon in Sofia in order to support the current and future Chairmanships and ensure the implementation of decisions that all of you have taken together. I will also remain an active participant in the process of strengthening the effectiveness of this organization that I feel passionately about.

Thank you for your attention and your continued support.