



## **Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe**

**Remarks by OSCE Secretary General Lamberto Zannier**

**“The Role of Security Sector Reform in Sustaining Peace:  
Challenges and Opportunities”**

*High-level Conference*

**Bratislava, 5 June 2017**

Ministers,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I remember well the discussions we had more than 10 years ago at the first Bratislava conference on Security Sector Reform, in which I participated in my former capacity as the Director of the OSCE Conflict Prevention Centre. We have come a long way and many things have changed since then. Armed conflict has once again become a reality on European soil. Divisions within the OSCE region are growing, undermining the very foundation of both European and international security. New, complex and often interconnected transnational security challenges have also emerged – from terrorism to cyber-threats to climate change and mass movements of people. Conflict prevention, which is the OSCE’s core business, is becoming ever more complicated.

The new Sustaining Peace Agenda, which recognizes the critical link between peace and development, provides an excellent framework for responding to contemporary security challenges. Encompassing a spectrum of activities ranging from conflict prevention to peacebuilding and development efforts, this new agenda calls for closer co-ordination between the spheres of diplomacy, security and development. It also emphasizes the importance of strategic partnerships – between international and regional organizations, national governments and other key stakeholders, including civil society. In this context, broadening our understanding of the complex mechanisms of the security sector is crucial.

A security sector that lacks integrity and democratic accountability can contribute to deteriorating security conditions and the escalation of violence and conflict. By contrast, a well-functioning, accountable and resilient security sector can play an important role in managing emerging conflict situations and preventing escalation and recurrence. This implies that support for national security sector reform processes should focus on long-term engagement to ensure sustainability. Past experiences have shown that political will and national ownership are key ingredients for success in strengthening democratic governance and supporting reforms in the security sector.

In the OSCE context, Security Sector Governance and Reform plays a particular role in conflict prevention.

The 1975 Helsinki Final Act, the founding document of the OSCE, pioneered a comprehensive concept of security embracing its politico-military, economic and environmental, and human dimensions. While the OSCE is first and foremost a security organization, its comprehensive security concept also provides effective tools to promote sustainable peace and development. Over the years, the OSCE has acquired outstanding expertise and developed a broad normative framework that clearly supports the concept of Security Sector Governance and Reform. The 1994 Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security is a key document, setting out the essential parameters for democratic control of armed and security forces. The OSCE Field Operations, Institutions and Secretariat support participating States in national reform processes and strengthening the governance of the security sector, including through support for police reform, border management and security, counter-terrorism, anti-corruption, justice sector reform and many other related areas. Allow me to mention a few examples:

- In Serbia, our Mission assists in strengthening good governance and democratic civilian control of the security sector, promoting the role of civil society and supporting education and research in the field of security.
- In Tajikistan, the OSCE Border Management Staff College provides extensive training to border control and customs services from the Central Asian states and beyond.
- Throughout the OSCE region, the Office of the Co-ordinator of Economic and Environmental Activities builds capacity in fighting corruption and money laundering among law enforcement and financial intelligence officials.
- In many participating States, the OSCE also supports the participation of women in security institutions. In Kyrgyzstan, for example, the OSCE Office supported the establishment of the Kyrgyz Association of Women in the Security Sector.
- We are introducing to our Partners for Co-operation our experiences deriving from the implementation of our Code of Conduct on politico-military aspects of security.

Our experiences have revealed that these and other tools have the greatest impact when different components of the security sector work more closely together. For example, fighting terrorism effectively requires the combined efforts of border control agencies, police services, the judicial sector, intelligence services, and the armed forces. Although the importance of these synergies is widely recognized, a better understanding of the complexity of the security sector and enhanced co-ordination between its different components is still needed. This also means understanding the different security needs of women and men and recognizing the important role of women in security institutions. For example, increasing the recruitment and promotion of female personnel, preventing human rights violations, and collaborating with women's organizations can create a more efficient, accountable and participatory security sector that responds to the specific needs of the entire population.

The OSCE is not alone in its endeavours. Today many international organizations support national Security Sector Reform efforts and have developed new approaches and frameworks. We are joining efforts with many partner organizations – including the UN– to forge effective responses to both traditional and new threats and challenges. We look for ways to complement their efforts with our own strengths, including our extensive field presence, which has played an essential role in assisting host countries with implementation of their reform agendas. By building on the comparative advantages of each multilateral actor, we can shape our common support more efficiently and we can work towards a more effective and systemic implementation.

Excellencies,

At the first Bratislava conference on Security Sector Reform, I spoke about the rich normative framework and practical experience the OSCE had to offer in this field. Since then the Organization has developed a more coherent and co-ordinated approach. We now have practical guidelines for our staff on how to support national Security Sector Governance and Reform processes in a more comprehensive and impact-oriented manner. The importance of a comprehensive approach, engaging in a broad range of activities and developing strategic partnerships are among the key elements these guidelines suggest. But further steps are needed, so I greatly appreciate Slovakia's steadfast leadership in promoting Security Sector Governance and Reform at the international level, including within the OSCE. In 2006, Slovakia, with the support of DCAF, issued a background paper on the UN's approach to SSR that prepared the ground for the UN's work today. In 2019, Slovakia will chair the OSCE, and I would invite you to prepare a similar concept paper for us.

In recent years, a number of OSCE Chairmanships – including Switzerland, Serbia, Germany and Austria – have supported our on-going efforts in this area. Our current Chairmanship, Austria, will convene a high-level conference on Security Sector Governance and Reform on 19 September in Vienna. It will provide an excellent opportunity for continuing today's discussions as well as charting out the way ahead for the OSCE.

Today I would like to encourage you to focus on identifying ways to increase co-operation among our organizations, particularly at the operational level. The OSCE's experiences show that making use of synergies between the politico-military, the economic and environmental, and the human dimensions of security can help us achieve the goals that we set together in the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda. Our efforts will be made stronger by applying comprehensive approaches, investing in conflict prevention, and building stronger partnerships with each other, but also with national governments, civil society, the business world, financial institutions, and other relevant stakeholders. Only by working together will we succeed in implementing the visionary but challenging Sustaining Peace Agenda.

Thank you.