



Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

**Secretary General Lamberto Zannier
Opening Remarks
2015 Annual Security Review Conference
Vienna, 23 June 2015**

State Secretary Ninčić,
Ambassador Šćepanović,
Mr. Erler,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Allow me to add my welcome to all participants, especially those who have joined us from capitals. I would also like to thank the State Secretary for her insightful remarks setting the scene for our discussions. The Annual Security Review Conference is the OSCE's premier event in the politico-military dimension, and one of the Organization's most important platforms for frank, open and inclusive dialogue. It provides an excellent opportunity to build on the efforts of the Forum for Security Co-operation and the Security Committee throughout the year to enhance synergies in the first dimension among all OSCE structures.

As the State Secretary has already noted, the crisis in and around Ukraine dominates the OSCE agenda. While resolving the crisis is our main focus, the Organization continues to work across the conflict cycle, constantly adapting and strengthening our activities in response to new challenges. Early warning continues to be one of the key components of our conflict cycle toolbox. Since the adoption of MC Decision 3/11 on "Elements of the Conflict Cycle," the OSCE's capacities to conduct early warning have been considerably strengthened. We have established a comprehensive early-warning system that includes critical instruments for collecting, analyzing and processing relevant information. We are now focused on this system's practical implementation and the structured use of early-warning tools by and within the OSCE executive structures.

One of the key lessons from our response to the crisis in and around Ukraine is that we need to have sufficient capacities for fact-finding on the ground. A functional early-warning system also needs the capacity to analyze critical information related to an escalating crisis and to translate these assessments into early action. Consequently we are increasing and enhancing the analytical capacities of both the Secretariat and our Field Operations to allow for deeper and more nuanced insights into potential or existing conflicts. This in turn will help us to close the early-warning/early-action gap by allowing us to develop appropriate response options well in advance of a possible escalation.

In terms of early action, we have also learned a great deal in the course of our response to the crisis in and around Ukraine. We have seen how important it is for the OSCE to be conceptually and operationally prepared for rapid response, and we should build on the work that the Conflict Prevention Center, in close co-operation with the Institutions and Field

Operations, has carried out in these areas over the past two years. Thanks to these efforts, human, financial and material resources have been made available on very short notice. The Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine – the SMM – has benefited not only from the dedication and flexibility of its own staff, but of the whole OSCE family, which has been working tirelessly in support of the Mission since its initial deployment. These efforts have been supplemented by technical means; for the first time in OSCE history, we are using unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), which are complemented by satellite-based information provided by participating States.

Our experience in and around Ukraine over the past year has also been enhanced by our positive and fruitful relationship with the United Nations, particularly the Department of Peace Keeping Operations. We have exchanged information and lessons learned with the UN throughout the process, and I was even asked to lead the discussion on the future of peace operations at the UN Secretary-General's recent retreat for heads of regional organizations.

Excellencies,

For the past year or so, the OSCE has faced a steep learning curve. During this comparatively short period, we have been teaching ourselves, learning from our experience on the ground, as well as bringing in external expertise. The effectiveness of our approach has made me even more convinced of the OSCE's ability to react quickly and deliver fast. We have shown that we have the flexibility to respond nimbly to rapidly evolving conditions on the ground, and to adapt quickly to the requirements of new political agreements and taskings.

But our response to the crisis in and around Ukraine has also highlighted the fact that dynamic security conditions restrict the scope for OSCE action. We are seeing the limits that a civilian monitoring mission with minimal protection and surveillance equipment faces in a conflict situation.

Purely civilian peace operations like the SMM have clearly identifiable limits to their ability to operate in adverse security conditions. It could be useful to consider how we could strengthen the Mission's capacity to cope with security challenges on the ground, including by enhancing its security protection functions in line with the peacekeeping mandate in the 1992 Helsinki document. I would be interested to hear from our participating States how they would assess such a potential supplement to our conflict cycle toolbox. This could be discussed in connection with wider mission planning processes and in line with established confidence- and security-building measures (CSBMs).

This brings me to another important topic on our agenda: arms control and CSBMs, which are also important mechanisms for conflict prevention and early warning. Ambassador Milačić, Chairperson of the Forum for Security Co-operation, will deliver her report shortly, so I will limit myself to some brief comments.

Today we are witnessing the resurgence of a polarized political environment in which divergent perceptions of security and reduced transparency and predictability have not only decreased trust but also challenged conventional military stability in Europe. In some ways this is reminiscent of the Cold War, although there are obvious differences in the dynamics, security relationships and security architecture.

In this context, it is all the more important to keep channels for engagement open and to use

them to encourage dialogue, dispel misperceptions or misunderstandings, and improve transparency.

The crisis in and around Ukraine has demonstrated the continued relevance of CSBMs, in particular the Vienna Document 2011, but it has also revealed that some traditional approaches to conventional arms control are not suited to contemporary challenges. Other instruments, although not fully utilized, remain at our disposal.

Strengthening arms control and CSBMs remains a long-term endeavour, and political commitments must be upheld. As I have noted on a number of occasions, the arms control debate needs to be revitalized and broadened. In this regard, the OSCE could play a significant role as the most inclusive platform for dialogue in our region.

Excellencies,

Traditional politico-military threats are not the only security challenges we face today. Transnational threats like terrorism, organized crime and trafficking in arms, drugs and human beings, as well as global threats to security created by climate change, are rapidly gaining prominence on the OSCE agenda. Addressing these complex and often interconnected challenges to security requires cooperation – including with partners outside the OSCE area since many of these threats are fed by instability, poverty, poor governance and conflict in neighbouring regions. Tackling transnational threats is also an area where I am convinced we can work together even in the current context of division and confrontation.

One of the most complex transnational threats is the phenomenon of foreign terrorist fighters. Last month I convened an OSCE Security Days conference to look at how “soft security” approaches can help pre-empt those forces within our societies that encourage vulnerable individuals to become foreign terrorist fighters – or to attempt terrorist actions in their home countries. Media, education and inclusive dialogue engaging women, youth and religious leaders can all play an important role in preventing radicalization and violent extremism that lead to terrorism by promoting tolerance, inclusiveness, acceptance and effective counter-narratives.

Irregular migration is another complicated transnational challenge. As the international community struggles to find adequate and humane responses to sharp increases in irregular migration, the OSCE can help to support efforts to secure state borders while safeguarding the rights and attending to the needs of migrants and refugees. The Secretariat is currently reviewing migration-related activities across the Organization to identify our comparative advantages in this area and to encourage greater coordination both internally and with external partners. I am considering holding an OSCE Security Days event in early 2016 to discuss this issue.

We are also strengthening our relations with our Mediterranean and Asian Partners for Co-operation with the aim of fostering coordinated approaches and joint strategies for tackling transnational and cross-regional security challenges. I count on the participating States to provide their continued political and financial support for our practical co-operation with our Mediterranean and Asian Partners.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

If there is one overarching lesson we have learned over the past year, it is that we need to strengthen the OSCE's conflict prevention capacities, and not only in the politico-military dimension. In today's fluid security environment, where we face both traditional and new kinds of threats, the OSCE's concept of comprehensive security is more relevant than ever.

Enhancing the OSCE's conflict prevention abilities requires strengthening our capacities for analysis and planning. I was pleased to see that these were among the key recommendations of the Interim Report of the Panel of Eminent Persons. We have already started taking steps in this direction, and I urge participating States to support our efforts, both politically and by providing adequate resources.

The Annual Security Review Conference provides an important platform for dialogue on constructive approaches to the challenges our region faces. So I look forward to productive, forward-looking discussions that can help to restore the OSCE's traditional culture of cooperation and joint action in tackling common security challenges.

Thank you.