



Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY

General Committee on Economic Affairs, Science, Technology
and the Environment

Meeting on 23 February 2012, 15:15 – 18:00

Hofburg Congress Centre, Vienna, Ratsaal, 5th floor.

Presentation
by Ambassador Eustathios LOZOS,
Permanent Representative of Greece to the OSCE
Chairman of the OSCE Economic and Environmental Committee

Mr. Chairman of the 2nd General Committee,
Ladies and gentlemen,

At the outset, allow me to express my appreciation for your kind invitation to participate at the Committee's meeting.

The responsibility that the Irish OSCE Chairmanship has placed on me with its decision to appoint me as the Chair of the OSCE Permanent Council's Economic and Environmental Committee for the current year, weights heavily on me at this very challenging time. I can't but be grateful for the trust and confidence shown to my country and me personally.

The Economic and Environmental Dimension was and remains an essential and indispensable part of the OSCE comprehensive concept of security. Especially today where the global economic and financial crisis have a serious impact upon the economies of all OSCE participating states.

What was initially perceived to be as a remote possibility now emerges as a menacing security threat. I sense that the OSCE's second dimension, for a long time undervalued, will take prominence in the years to come.

However, we can't ignore the fact that the final product of OSCE's work in the 2nd Dimension sometimes lacks clear orientation and does not fit into the cross-dimensional perspective of our common and individual security perception.

Last year in Vilnius, the Permanent Council adopted decision No. 1011 that set clear-cut targets to enhance the effectiveness of the 2nd Dimension's activities. You must have noticed that the Vilnius decision falls into the sequence of several previous decisions that were adopted at the basis of the 2009 Greek Chairmanship's Report on the Future Orientation of the Economic and Environmental Dimension.

Amongst others, the Vilnius decision establishes a systematic approach to the 2nd Committee's work and increases the interaction between participating States and OSCE structures in the pursuit of the objectives of the 2003 OSCE Strategy Document from the Economic and Environmental Dimension adopted in Maastricht.

Allow me in this regard, to say a few words with regard to the principles and objectives I have set forth in order to fulfill the tasking entrusted to me.

First and foremost, I intend to turn a few "stumbling blocks" into "stepping stones" of opportunity for an enhanced dialogue between participating States.

My first and overarching objective is to support the Irish Chairmanship in pursuing its priority on Good Governance. The issue, in my view, touches upon fundamental principles of economic as well as democratic development of our countries and targets right into the heart of many causes of the financial crisis we are confronted with.

The issue is the main theme for this year Economic and Environmental Forum and the goal is to adopt a Ministerial Decision in Dublin. The first preparatory conference took place in Vienna earlier this month, and the next is scheduled to be held in Dublin in April.

My second objective is to ensure the proper follow-up to Ministerial Council decisions. To this end, we will seek enhancing cross-dimensional approaches, complementarities with other relevant Organizations and engaging with OSCE Partners for Co-operation.

Finally, guided by the tasking of the Vilnius decision, I initiated the process of reviewing implementation of the 2003 Maastricht Strategy to assess if it still provides sufficient guidance to participating States and OSCE executive structure in addressing evolving economic and environmental challenges. A first discussion on this matter took place yesterday at the EEC meeting. I have provided the Chair of this Committee with the documentation that form the basis of our dialogue.

The economic and environmental threats to security throughout the OSCE area, the social repercussions of the economic crisis, the security consequences of climate change and the devastating results of natural and man-made disasters, new technological achievements, cyber threats and scarcity of raw materials, call for a more thorough investigation of the Maastricht Strategy's provisions and their implementation.

I conclude, allow me to make the following observations:

Close to 70 years, have led the European citizenry to arrive at two conclusions:

- *** That war as a means to resolve socio-economic problems is no longer an option; and
- *** That citizens have now a greater participation in the public debate.

The first conclusion is widely regarded as a self-evident truth and its supporters perceive no contradiction in their equally loud support for expensive armaments.

The second conclusion is enthusiastically propagated by the innumerable interests that have substituted their collective voice for the voice of individual voters. That this substitution does not bode well for parliamentary democracy has escaped the notice of most observers.

Mr. Chairman,

Ladies and gentlemen

I have invited participating States to contribute to the sensitive discussion of reviewing the 2003 Maastricht Strategy by presenting concrete proposals. The overall efforts should address the unprecedented erosion of popular confidence in the powers that be – be they political, economic, educational, financial or spiritual.

Thank you

PROPOSAL

The Maastricht Document set goals and targets. That they did not materialize does not mean they were not rightfully set. Because changes and mutations do not occur when one observes facts happened in the past it is advisable, at this juncture, to avoid an exercise that will set in motion possible modifications or additions to the Documents. Predictions cannot exceed a span of time, narrow that is and conditioned by uncertainty. Therefore, a mechanism could be explored to monitor the provisions of the Document which will continue to be the basis of OSCE's activities in the field. The annual EEDIM could then also serve as a framework for assessing the results and provide guidance for the future

In short, without duplicating the work done by other more specialized Organizations and agencies, with a more "interventionist" policies, the OSCE could tap the information resources of its member states and present for the edification of "average citizens" world-wide, cool summaries of the parameters in specific areas which, taken together, threaten stability and security in the OSCE area. This could include issues pertaining to the vulnerability of populations and the erosion of social achievements in times of economic crisis, as well as demographic, economic and financial trends and initiatives threatening the physical environment. However, OSCE summaries ought to be summaries of facts and figures. No interpretation. No commentaries. No plans of action. The fiction must be laid to rest that the "average citizen" needs explanation by experts as to what facts and figures really mean