

**Address by the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office, Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs
and Trade, Eamon Gilmore T.D., to the 21st Annual Session of the
OSCE Parliamentary Assembly**

Monaco, 5 July 2012

Prime Minister Roger, President of the National Council of Monaco, President Emeritus of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, Secretaries-General, Distinguished Members of Parliament, Ladies and Gentlemen.

It is a great pleasure to join you today and to have this opportunity to address the 21st Annual Session of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly in this fine city of Monte Carlo.

Ireland assumed the Chairmanship of the OSCE this year for the first time, and we are now just past the mid-way point of what has been a busy and active Chairmanship so far.

I wish, at the outset, to pay tribute to the work carried out by the Parliamentary Assembly, in particular the Assembly's role in facilitating inter-parliamentary dialogue across the OSCE region. I have already held a number of meetings this year with office-holders of the Parliamentary Assembly, and was privileged to visit the headquarters of the Assembly in Copenhagen in March, where I met with the dedicated staff. I wish to emphasise once again, the readiness of the Irish Chairmanship to work closely with the Parliamentary Assembly in order to further our common objectives.

Mr. Chairman,

As we pass the mid-way mark, it is appropriate to review some of the priorities of the Irish Chairmanship, what we have achieved to date, and what remains ahead of us.

In my address to the Permanent Council in January, I emphasized that Ireland would be pragmatic and fair-minded in its approach, and that our aim was to elaborate a set of priorities that would ensure balance and coherence of approach across all three dimensions. I also indicated that we would strive to achieve concrete results, through a small and balanced

package of decisions and declarations for adoption at the Dublin Ministerial Council in December. These goals remain the same.

Ireland has always attached importance to the **Human Dimension** of the OSCE. Since 1975, the OSCE has developed a large set of commitments in the fields of human rights, democracy and the rule of law. These commitments were developed jointly and adopted unanimously by all participating States, making them a powerful tool for change. As reaffirmed in Astana, OSCE participating States are “accountable to [their] citizens and responsible to each other” for the full implementation of their commitments. We must all play our part, Governments and parliamentarians alike, in ensuring that States uphold their commitments.

In January 2012, Ireland proposed an ambitious programme of Human Dimension events. The topics were agreed by the Permanent Council on 22 March, and a number of successful meetings have already taken place, including a meeting on ‘Combating Racism, Intolerance and Discrimination in Society through Sport’ in late March, and a seminar on the ‘Rule of Law framework for combating Trafficking in Human Beings’, in Warsaw in mid-May. A meeting on ‘Democratic elections and election observation’ will take place in Vienna next week, with the important involvement of parliamentarians.

On 18-19 June, Ireland hosted a well-attended and highly interactive Human Dimension event in Dublin. The **Dublin Conference on Internet Freedom** met our key objective of setting out the basic human rights framework which underpins all activity on the Internet, exploring also many of the key issues and challenges related to internet freedom. The Chairmanship used its prerogative to experiment with the format of the Conference, seeking to introduce greater opportunities for dialogue and interactivity. Feedback from the vast majority of participants was extremely positive. We were particularly pleased to welcome a large number of NGOs, bloggers, internet activists and web journalists to Dublin, all of whom added to the rich debate. The Irish Chairmanship is committed to advancing the issue of internet freedom, with a view to ensuring that the internet remains an open, global and public forum for exercising freedom of opinion and expression and for facilitating the enjoyment of other human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Other meetings will take place in the coming months, including the annual Human Dimension Implementation Meeting (HDIM), which is scheduled to take place in Warsaw from 24 September-5 October. This annual meeting provides a vital opportunity for

participating States to interact with civil society from throughout the OSCE region on the whole range of Human Dimension topics, as well as on a number of special topics chosen by the Chairmanship. I know that the Parliamentary Assembly is also an active participant.

For the remainder of our term, the Irish Chairmanship will also continue to work closely with ODIHR, the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities and the Representative on Freedom of the Media to address specific instances where OSCE commitments are not being met. The Parliamentary Assembly can play a significant role in this work, helping to ensure that all channels of communication remain open.

Mr. Chairman,

The Irish Chairmanship is deeply committed to the OSCE's **election observation activities**, which are fundamental to our work as a community of States committed to respect for human rights, democracy and the rule of law.

This is a common OSCE endeavour between the Parliamentary Assembly and ODIHR, based on the 1997 Co-operation Agreement, and I am pleased to note the high-level of cooperation which has been a feature of election observation missions so far in 2012. As Chair, we committed ourselves to provide all necessary support to the Parliamentary Assembly and ODIHR in this crucial area. We hope that States holding elections in 2012 will continue to issue timely invitations to observe these, in accordance with their OSCE commitments.

While on the subject of elections, I might mention that earlier this year the Chairmanship, acting in close consultation with Secretary General Zannier and his field staff, as well as relevant States, assisted in brokering an agreement which facilitated voting in Kosovo in the recent Serbian presidential and parliamentary elections, under OSCE supervision. The elections took place in a peaceful and orderly manner on 6 May and 20 May. The OSCE's efforts helped to defuse any potential confrontation, and the OSCE demonstrated once again its ability to rise to meet new challenges, to engage all relevant actors and to conduct successfully a demanding operation in a very tight timeframe.

Mr. Chairman,

The OSCE continues to play an important role in ensuring peace, stability and security in our region. The confidence and security building measures adopted within the **Politico-Military Dimension** remain central to the enhancement of security within the OSCE area. Our

priority, as Chairmanship, is to see continued progress on updating these measures and on enhancing the conflict prevention capacity of the organisation.

The collective goal of the Organisation, as agreed at the 2010 Astana Summit, is to work towards a genuine Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian Security Community which is rooted in agreed principles, shared commitments and common goals. The recent Annual Security Review Conference provided an opportunity to reflect on the building blocks available to us in the areas of arms control, conflict prevention and resolution and trans-national threats.

Continued reflection will be required as we take forward work to identify the steps necessary to achieve this security community.

One of our Chairmanship priorities is to increase the role and contribution of the OSCE in the field of cyber security. Ensuring a safe and secure cyber environment is of crucial importance to all our societies, as cyber threats have the potential to endanger our national security, public safety and economic competitiveness. I am pleased that progress has been achieved in this regard, through the establishment of an Informal Working Group on Information and Communications Technologies. The Working Group, which has begun its work, will elaborate a set of Confidence Building Measures on risk reduction, transparency and attribution, with a view to reducing the risk of misidentification of a cyber incident.

Discussions are continuing on the three remaining decisions on transnational threats which were not agreed at Vilnius. These decisions seek to establish a strategic police framework, a concept for combating illicit drugs and to consolidate the OSCE's counter-terrorism mandates. I hope that delegations will continue to engage in a constructive spirit so that we can adopt these decisions in the period ahead, with a view to taking forward their implementation.

We are continuing the good work carried out last year in updating the Vienna Document and are working closely with the three Chairs of the Forum for Security Cooperation during 2012.

Conflict resolution remains at the core of the OSCE's mandate and, together with Secretary General Zannier, we are taking forward the implementation of the Conflict Cycle decision which was agreed at Vilnius. This decision assists the OSCE in deepening its involvement in all phases of the conflict cycle and strengthens its capacity to tackle conflict, from prevention to resolution and post-conflict rehabilitation.

As Chair-in-Office, we are continuing efforts to make progress towards lasting settlements of a number of **conflicts** in the OSCE area. Among these is the conflict in Moldova regarding the territory of Transdniestria; the conflict in Georgia regarding the territories of Abkhazia and South Ossetia; and the conflict which is the subject of the Minsk process.

I am assisted in this task by Ambassador Erwan Fouéré, who is my Special Representative for the Transdniestrian settlement process, and by Ambassador Pádraig Murphy, my Special Representative for the Southern Caucasus, who is assisted in relation to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict by my Personal Representative, Ambassador Andrzej Kasprzyk. They are cooperating with international actors on the ground as well as maintaining close contact with the parties.

I want to mention the Transdniestria settlement process, where progress has recently been achieved. The agreement at the last session of the talks in April on a principles and procedures text and on an agenda for the talks represents an important landmark in our efforts to seek a lasting political settlement. The increased level of interaction between the Moldovan and Transdniestrian authorities has had a positive impact on the talks process and, when the next round takes place in Vienna next week, I hope that substantive progress will be possible.

As part of our support for the 5+2 talks, Moldovan and Transdniestrian negotiators visited Dublin and Belfast in May on a study visit to learn more about the Northern Ireland peace process. In June, the German Government hosted an informal conference, which has contributed to the building of trust between the two sides.

Turning to the South Caucasus, in mid-June it was my privilege to visit all three countries in that region. I received a warm welcome in each of the three and was able, in talks with political leaders, to get a first hand impression of the situation in the region. I discussed with them how we can best make progress towards resolution of the ‘protracted conflicts’, which have a very negative impact on the lives of the peoples of the region. I urged all concerned to engage constructively in discussions aimed at finding solutions to these conflicts. I also discussed progress in advancing democratic reforms and respect for fundamental freedoms and rights, issues which go to the heart of what the OSCE stands for.

Mr. Chairman,

In April, I hosted a high-level conference in Dublin which was entitled '**Shared Future: Building and Sustaining Peace, the Northern Ireland case study.**' This event brought together over two hundred delegates from across the OSCE region and provided them with a unique opportunity to listen to the experiences of a range of senior political figures with first-hand experience of the peace process.

I was pleased to welcome, amongst others, senior political leaders from Northern Ireland. We also heard from former US Senator George Mitchell and had a video message from Secretary of State, Hilary Clinton. The former President of Finland and Nobel Peace Prize winner, Martti Ahtisaari, acted as moderator, bringing his unique experience of conflict resolution and mediation to bear on what were frank and open discussions. I was pleased also that Vice-President Picula was able to participate in this event.

I believe the Conference succeeded in our objective of exploring some of the themes common to conflicts in general. The role of international assistance in creating a space for peace was of particular interest to delegations. I hope we will have encouraged those engaged in negotiations elsewhere to persevere in their efforts by showing that peace is possible and by explaining how it was achieved.

As regards the **Economic and Environmental Dimension**, this clearly has a particular resonance today, given the global economic and environmental challenges with which we are all confronted. Within the Economic and Environmental Dimension, Ireland's core theme is the promotion of security and stability through good governance. The financial crisis has demonstrated how poor governance can lead to economic decline and how good governance must be the foundation for the road to recovery. During the two preparatory conferences, held to date as part of the Economic and Environmental Forum process, we have focussed in particular on measures to counter corruption, money laundering and terrorist financing.

At the second preparatory conference, held in Dublin from 23-24 April, we highlighted the work of the Irish Criminal Assets Bureau as a model for other participating States to consider. We also explored the linkages between transparency and socio-economic development. Good governance and transparency are central to developing stable and sustainable economies, whereas ineffective governance clearly undermines economic development.

The Irish Chairmanship remains committed to a successful Forum process. We welcome the progress made to date and look forward to the concluding Forum meeting in Prague in

September. Ultimately, our aim is to prepare a proposal for the Ministerial in December. The task will be to define more clearly the OSCE's role in maximising its support for international efforts in promoting good governance.

Mr. Chairman,

In addition to the priorities I have already outlined, the Irish Chairmanship is taking forward a number of other issues, as well as specific taskings given to us by participating States.

Building on the Decision of the Vilnius Ministerial Council, we are working to enhance the OSCE's engagement with the **Partners for Co-operation**, together with the Lithuanian and Ukrainian Chairs of the Asian and Mediterranean Contact Groups. I know that the Parliamentary Assembly has been very active in reaching out to the Partner countries and I commend your activities in this regard.

I can also report that, in follow-up to Vilnius Ministerial Council decision No. 12/11, the Irish Chairmanship is actively taking forward **Mongolia's application to become an OSCE participating State**. A familiarization visit to Mongolia was held from 3 to 6 June, led by the Secretary General, Lamberto Zannier, and the Permanent Council Chair, Ambassador O'Leary, who were accompanied by a team of experts from the OSCE Institutions, the Secretariat, and the Chairmanship. The purpose of this visit was to consult with key government officials and representatives of civil society about Mongolia's understanding of, and commitment to, the requirements of OSCE membership. The report on the OSCE's visit to Mongolia was distributed to participating States and Partners yesterday, and should facilitate discussions on the matter, leading, hopefully, to the adoption of a Ministerial Council decision on Mongolia's accession. I very much hope to greet Mongolia as the 57th OSCE participating State at the Dublin Ministerial Council meeting in December.

We are also keen to move forward on issues related to the **legal status of the OSCE**. Our aim is to equip the Organization with the legal protections and status that it requires to achieve its core objectives. To this end, we commissioned Ambassador John Bernhard, the former Permanent Representative of Denmark to the OSCE, to take a fresh look at the issues related to the legal status. We are seeking to move beyond the stalemate of recent years that prevented the *Draft Convention on international legal personality, legal capacity and privileges and immunities of the OSCE* from being adopted at successive Ministerial Councils. A draft Constituent Document has recently been circulated by the Chairmanship and we intend to take forward discussions on this basis. The draft is a short, technical text

which illustrates concisely the functions of the OSCE. We believe that if we approach this exercise in a positive spirit, we may have some hope of success. In taking forward this exercise, the Irish Chair will seek to ensure that there is no change to the fundamental character of the OSCE or to the mandate of the various constituent bodies of the OSCE.

Another area on which we have been keen to take practical and pragmatic steps is **the OSCE's interaction with other regional and international organisations**. At the beginning of this year, the Irish Chairmanship commissioned a report to look at this issue and also highlight the comparative advantages the OSCE can offer. This exercise was not intended to result in a reorganisation of OSCE structures, or question the three security dimensions of the OSCE, but rather to examine the OSCE's position in the European security architecture and highlight how the OSCE can maintain and strengthen its role as the primary comprehensive security organisation in the Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian region.

The report, which was authored by Lars-Erik Lundin, a former EU Ambassador, recommends that co-operation with other organisations should be goal-driven, focussing on certain priority areas of work including the conflict cycle, transnational threats and the Human Dimension. The report also focuses on how synergies could be developed to maximise the use of resources and enable the OSCE to tap additional sources of funding through other international organisations, including through the EU and UN system. These recommendations, which are very much driven by modern management practices, will be discussed at ambassadorial level in Vienna and will feed into the Helsinki + 40 process. We see the study as planting a seed from which the Organisation can build for the future.

Finally, as the fortieth anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act beckons in 2015, it is timely to start to reflect on the OSCE's future work and how to ensure its continuing effectiveness and relevance. The '**Helsinki + 40 concept**', which the Irish Chairmanship has been advancing in consultation with the Troika and the future Swiss and Serbian Chairmanships, offers an important opportunity to adopt a more forward-looking and strategic approach for the OSCE, moving towards realisation of the common vision agreed at the Astana Summit in 2010, that is to say, a comprehensive, cooperative and indivisible security community throughout the OSCE area. In our view, the overarching goal should be of a security community where the prospect of resolving conflicts by force is unthinkable, where human rights and democratic values are fully embedded, and economic and environmental policies act to reinforce our mutual security.

Mr. Chairman,

I hope I have given you a flavour of the work already undertaken by the Irish Chairmanship this year, and what is yet to come. Obviously, in the months ahead, our focus will be on the preparations for the Dublin Ministerial meeting, in addition to the programme of work for the second half of the year that I have outlined today. I am confident that, through effective cooperation with all relevant actors, including the Parliamentary Assembly, we can achieve solid and lasting progress during 2012 and beyond.

Thank you for your attention.