



Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

Secretary General Lamberto Zannier

Address to the Plenary Session of the 22nd Annual Session of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly

Istanbul

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Minister Davutoğlu,
Speaker of the Turkish Grand National Assembly, Çiçek,
President Grossruck,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am pleased to have the honour once again of addressing the plenary session of the annual meeting of the Parliamentary Assembly.

The Parliamentary Assembly plays an important role in promoting OSCE values, principles and commitments. Your efforts make a concrete contribution to realizing our vision of a common security community.

I would like to thank you, the Parliamentary Assembly, and our Turkish hosts for providing this welcome opportunity to advance the debate on how the OSCE can best contribute to security and stability in our region. In the OSCE, we know very well how dialogue helps to foster trust and confidence among States and to bridge persistent differences, which in turn helps us to address common threats.

As you know, two years from now, the OSCE will celebrate the 40th anniversary of the signing of the Helsinki Final Act, a historic triumph of co-operation over conflict. A central legacy of Helsinki is our comprehensive approach to security encompassing the three dimensions.

Today the OSCE is reaffirming our commitment to comprehensive security and redefining the security agenda in light of contemporary challenges in our region through the “Helsinki +40” process.

Helsinki +40 provides an opportunity to think creatively and strategically about the future of the OSCE. The process will help us to more clearly define the critical role of the OSCE in today’s evolving security environment and to look for effective responses to current challenges. Track II involvement in the Helsinki +40 discussions through our Security Days conferences, our new network of think tanks and other avenues is an important element of the process. The Parliamentary Assembly can also make an important contribution to Helsinki +40.

The Chairman-in-Office has already informed you about the goals, progress and future directions of Helsinki +40. I would only add that although reform is not the primary goal of the process, it is clear that some updating is needed to better equip the Organization to meet contemporary threats to security. The OSCE’s greatest strengths are our comprehensive approach to security, our inclusiveness, our permanent dialogue and our consensus-based decision-making. But we need to reform and modernize our working procedures and structures to better meet the challenges of our time. This includes greater harmonization among the OSCE institutional components.

But let me make one thing clear: Reforms resulting from the Helsinki +40 process should not lead to a dilution of the OSCE commitments. There is no need to modify the commitments of the past; instead we should complement them with new tools.

Still, we need to be creative in finding new ways to engage while protecting fundamental values and the goals of the Helsinki Final Act. One way could be to invest in the first and second dimensions to achieve progress in strategic areas like conventional arms control and

to strengthen our tools for promoting good governance and fighting corruption – while at the same time keeping the human dimension high on the agenda.

I would like to thank the Parliamentary Assembly for making Helsinki +40 the focus of your annual meeting, and I welcome your ideas and contributions to the ongoing debate. We need active and sustained engagement by our participating States for the Helsinki +40 process to succeed, so I also ask for your support. When you return to your capitals, please bring the Helsinki +40 agenda to the attention of your governments, your parliaments and your constituencies.

Allow me to say a few words about the security challenges facing the OSCE today.

In today's globalized world, security is no longer a zero-sum game. States cannot confront transnational threats like terrorism, drug trafficking and cyber-security challenges alone. We are all in it together: strengthening the security of one benefits the whole community.

As highlighted at the recent Security Days conference in Vienna on the OSCE in the 21st century, in an increasingly complex and multipolar security environment, perceptions of threats vary from one state to another. So it is extremely important that we identify and understand these differences, and on that basis define common goals. I am encouraged by the degree of convergence when it comes to shared understanding that transnational threats can only be tackled together. We should continue exploring how the OSCE's potential can be used to confront these challenges more effectively and thereby strengthen trust and confidence.

I already see progress in some areas. The OSCE is working on conceptualizing and operationalizing its role in addressing transnational threats, including new cyber-security/ICT challenges. This calls for greater operational interaction among international organizations, beginning with the United Nations. Co-operating with other regional security organizations has also become crucial to confronting these challenges effectively.

At the 2010 Astana Summit, OSCE participating States recognized that the security of our region is “inextricably linked” with that of neighbouring regions. As a result, we are strengthening our relationship with our Partners for Co-operation in Asia and the

Mediterranean, and developing a more strategic approach to our larger neighbourhood. Here in the Mediterranean region, we cannot ignore the conflict in Syria, which as we all know is having a direct impact on Turkey's security. On a more positive note, just last week during our Security Days conference, Libya's Minister of Foreign Affairs formally submitted Libya's application to become a Partner.

We are stepping up our efforts to approach Afghanistan and the Central Asian region strategically as the date for withdrawal of ISAF forces fast approaches. In devising the strategic vision for Afghanistan post-2014, the OSCE could serve as an interesting model for regional co-operation and dialogue. We are already focusing on close co-operation with regional institutions, with a strong role for Russia and the Central Asian States. Mongolia, which had been one of our Asian Partners and became our 57th participating State last year, is also eager to engage with the region.

The OSCE Border Management Staff College in Dushanbe, Tajikistan, is an excellent model for effective regional co-operation and assistance in Central Asia. It fosters regional networking and co-operation among senior and middle ranking officials of ministries and state agencies, which facilitates common security assessments, mechanisms for information sharing and joint operations. Providing the College with a stable source of funding would enable it to make full use of its potential and, if supported by participating States, develop into a fully-fledged institution devoted to tackling transnational threats in the region.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Especially because so many OSCE initiatives are devoted to preventing conflicts, often our achievements do not receive the attention and credit they deserve in capitals and among the broader public. This makes it more difficult to secure the support needed to sustain our important efforts to increase security and stability in the OSCE region.

As the Organization's tasks and the scope of our work continue to grow, this puts increasing pressure on our budget, which we are now starting to discuss for 2014.

In this regard, I urge you to be strong advocates for the OSCE in your governments and parliaments. In particular, I ask you to help us obtain support for our field operations, which

are at the core of our efforts, and to help secure resources to strengthen our work in key regions that pose growing challenges to the OSCE area like Central Asia and Afghanistan.

The increased co-ordination among our chairmanships in the run-up to 2015 gives us a welcome chance to work toward a long-term agenda, including longer-term planning and developing longer-term priorities and resources.

I am aware that the Parliamentary Assembly would like to contribute to improving transparency and accountability within the Organization. I appreciate and share your concern. Transparency and accountability are core values that apply to all components of the Organization, something we all must strive for. Indeed, I would be glad to facilitate an exchange of good practices on accountability and transparency between the two Secretariats.

Since I became Secretary General almost two years ago, I have been committed to making the OSCE Secretariat more efficient and responsive to the needs of the participating States, and I can assure you that everything we do is public and transparent. Indeed, we just received positive evaluations for 2012 from our external auditors and the Audit Committee, which report to the Permanent Council. We also have an Office of Internal Oversight that conducts internal audits, evaluations and investigations; it reports directly to me on internal control and risk management, and on the cost-effectiveness and integrity of OSCE activities. To introduce any new accountability mechanisms would require the consent of the participating States.

I have noted that some of your current resolutions seek to task the Organization. I would encourage you to work closely with your capitals to secure support and resources for any taskings you suggest, for ultimately it is the participating States that assign our priorities and tasks. I am sure that the Permanent Council will welcome your suggestions and your advocacy for support for the OSCE within your national parliaments.

Finally, I would like to say a few words about the Albanian elections earlier this week. I was very pleased by reports of excellent co-operation between the Parliamentary Assembly and ODIHR. This was especially important given the strong polarization we witnessed before the elections. I would like to see the close co-operation between the Parliamentary Assembly and ODIHR in Albania set the tone for future OSCE election observation missions.

This underscores an important point. We all must strive toward greater coherence and unity of purpose among the OSCE's institutional components. After all, we are all part of the same Organization – we are devoted to upholding the same principles, we share the same goals for our participating States and their citizens – in short, we are all playing on the same team. So let's play like a winning team – let's work together and support each other more effectively by increasing our communication, co-operation and co-ordination. And then the real winners will be the citizens and governments of our participating States.

I wish you fruitful discussions in the coming days, and I look forward to the outcomes of your deliberations.

Thank you.