

Address by the Rapporteur of the 1st Committee, Ms. Vilija Aleknaite Abramikiene

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Istanbul to Istanbul: Developing an OSCE Security Community

Colleagues

This year, as we plan to have our Annual Session in Istanbul, the host of the 1999 OSCE Summit, I thought it appropriate to start this Committee's Helsinki +40 debate by centring our discussion on what I call *"from Istanbul to Istanbul: developing an OSCE security community."*

It is important to remember the Istanbul Summit 1999 not only because of the pleasant feeling of "being back". 14 years ago the concentrated political will by the consent of the governments reached the highest point, which unfortunately was not reached again since that time. It took 11 years till the next Summit in Astana. In Istanbul the milestone documents of the OSCE, such as the Charter for European security, were adopted.

In 1999, our Heads of State and Government came together and agreed on the Istanbul Summit Declaration. In 1999, we made a number of important political commitments. And I regret to say that since then, implementation has been scarce, and on some issues we have even seen deterioration. I think that at the Istanbul summer session we'll have the opportunity to analyse in more depth why not goals of the organization have been reached. One of the reasons is, as I see it, lack of sufficient progress of democracy in some member-states, which means insufficient implementation of our commitments in the area of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Therefore, I'm inviting you all, dear colleagues, to remember the Istanbul Summit Declaration as the starting point, which was based on the principles and values of the Helsinki Final Act, and which could help us to assess in real terms the added value of our organization, as well as to stimulate its efficacy. I hope that today's discussion, your ideas and input will enrich my final report.

This time I want to highlight three important common security issues in the OSCE region that are in need of our undivided attention; 1) **arms control**, 2) **resolving protracted conflicts**, and the 3) **future challenges that the OSCE may face with the 2014 withdrawal of International Security Assistance Forces from Afghanistan**. Many of these issues are also mentioned by the Ukrainian Chairmanship as priorities for action, and they are, in some way, echoed in the Helsinki +40 commitments States agreed to at the Dublin Ministerial. I hope that we can help move the process forward by adding our ideas to the table.

At the Istanbul Summit, participating States agreed that arms control and confidence- and security-building measures (CSBMs) are important parts of the overall effort to enhance security by fostering stability, transparency and predictability in the military field. They also called for timely adaptation and,

when required, further development of arms control agreements and CSBMs. At the same time, leaders of participating States committed themselves to full implementation of arms control obligations, including disarmament and CSBMs. It is clearly time, again, to remind our Governments of these obligations and to call for action when it comes to reactivating the CFE Treaty, updating the Vienna Document and also on the 1994 Document on Non-Proliferation.

Our States signed onto the Helsinki Final Act in full agreement that the security of each participating State is inseparably linked to that of all others. For the one billion people of our region to truly live in peace, we need to do better for the thousands of citizens who continue to suffer amid protracted conflicts. The progress seen in Transdniestria is movement in the right direction. We look upon the Ukrainian chairmanship with great expectations for significant steps forward. Ongoing negotiations between Georgia and Russia both within the framework of the Geneva Discussions and of their own initiatives should be further encouraged. At the same time negotiations between Armenia and Azerbaijan continue with the support of the Co-Chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group. We, as parliamentarians, have the ability to reach out and encourage peaceful solutions and dialogue and we should continue to do so. And even when two sides are at a stalemate, we know from our own experiences, they can probably reach common ground on other, perhaps lesser issues. Maybe it is transportation or commerce, but these things have a real impact on the everyday lives of citizens and play their own role in preparing people for lasting, peaceful solutions to conflict, and we should encourage that engagement as well.

Located in the “Heart of Asia” where South Asia, Central Asia, Eurasia and the Middle East meet, Afghanistan is a country in transition. As the responsibility for security shifts from NATO’s International Security Assistance Forces to the Afghan National Security Forces in the framework of the “Kabul Process”, we need to more actively engage with our partners in the region to encourage a positive outcome as directed in the Vilnius Ministerial Council Decision on Strengthening OSCE engagement with Afghanistan. In this regard, Afghanistan remains among our Organization’s most critical Partners for Co-operation.

The work we do now to help stabilize democratic, legal and security institutions in the country will have real consequences for the challenges we will face in the near future along the country’s borders.

Related to the situation in Afghanistan, I would also like to mention the transnational threats, which by their nature, require a common response. I would like to emphasize the importance of fighting terrorism and of border security.

Terrorism presents a challenge for policy-makers to provide for a level of border security while facilitating legitimate cross-border travel and commerce. According to the National Counterterrorism Center more people were killed in terrorist attacks inside Afghanistan in 2011 than in each of the previous years. As International Security Assistance Forces withdraw, measures should be taken to prevent this trend from increasing drastically.

Border security continues to be of great concern in the OSCE region. Most recently clashes on the border of Tajikistan and Afghanistan as well as Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan remind us of the vulnerability of our borders and the necessity for solidarity and partnership. In this respect, Central Asia is exposed, and they need our assistance to avoid any possible spill-over of threats from Afghanistan ranging from war, terrorism and religious extremism to drug trafficking and illegal migration.

There are of course many other outstanding challenges, both in the region and other parts of the world, which can hardly be faced with indifference from the OSCE. The lack of social cohesion, internal conflicts, or civil wars not only prevent common people from enjoying their lives to the fullest. They all constitute security risks of spill-over. For example, hundreds of thousands of refugees from Syria have flowed into neighboring countries, notably Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey. In light of the ongoing conflicts, which tend to cluster geographically, the OSCE may serve in its capacity of a bank of expertise, notably in the area of enhancing regional cooperation, dialogue and confidence building.

It is clear that protracted conflicts and new flash points in the region urgently call for expansion of OSCE's activities in Eurasia.

Dear Colleagues, in the Monaco Declaration, especially in the politico-military dimension, we have raised important goals relevant to all our nations. And we must confess that all of these goals have not yet been realised. The organisation should actively contribute to the process of substantial modernisation of the Vienna Document, should reach more concrete results and tangible benefits in such areas as e.g. lowering the thresholds. On the other hand, we must admit that our organization has reacted to many new security challenges and raised the organization's profile. At the same time, we remain concerned about the silence regarding resumption of negotiations on the CFE Treaty.

Developing a security community requires building trust (or re-building it if need be) and having an open dialogue aiming to enhance security by increasing transparency and predictability in our region.

So as we look to Istanbul, a gateway between Asia and Europe, between East and West, we have a choice. We as the OSCE can cooperate and innovate and push open that gate for a future of peace and security we've all been working toward or we can let old conflicts fester and clutch to established multinational blocs and close that gateway. Through our work and that of our governments, let us choose to push it open and make Istanbul in 2013 as meaningful for us as it was for the OSCE 14 years ago.

Dear colleagues, I thank you for your attention and I look forward to hearing your comments and suggestions.