

**Address by His Excellency, Leonid Kozhara,
Chairperson-in-Office of the OSCE,
Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine
At the Annual Meeting of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly
29 June 2013, Istanbul**

*Prime Minister Erdoğan,
Minister Davutoğlu,
Speaker of the Turkish Grand National Assembly, Çiçek.
President Grossruck,
Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen,*

I am delighted to be here today to address the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly at its Annual Session in this vibrant and culturally diverse city of Istanbul. We all enjoy generous hospitality and excellent organization of this important event, thus I wish at the outset to express gratitude to our **Turkish hosts**.

I would also like to thank all of you, and especially **President Grossruck** and his predecessor **President Migliori**, for your engagement and constructive co-operation with the Ukrainian Chairmanship-in-Office of the OSCE.

Being myself a parliamentarian with extensive experience, including as a member of many inter-parliamentary delegations, before I took Minister's office, I am fully aware of the importance of your work and would like to assure you of my strong determination **to foster cooperation** with the Assembly. I am confident that the OSCE gets stronger by enhancing cooperation with you – elected representatives of more than one billion people living across 57 participating States. It is our **common responsibility** to provide secure future for our vast region.

Ladies and gentlemen,

In February my Special Envoy presented to the Assembly's Winter Meeting Ukraine's priorities for its OSCE Chairmanship. Our today's meeting provides an opportunity to **take stock** of what has been achieved in this first half of 2013 and **to get a sense of where** increased efforts would be most beneficial.

The Ukrainian OSCE Chairmanship has been consistent in pursuing a **balanced approach** across three OSCE dimensions, in promoting **trust and confidence** among the participating States, in upholding the **principles and goals** of this Organization. Today I would like to confirm that our determination in this respect remains strong.

Let me start with the overarching topic of this year's Annual Session, namely the **Helsinki +40 process**. In two years we will mark four decades since the signing of the Helsinki Final Act. We perceive this anniversary in a very **pragmatic way**. It is an excellent opportunity to **re-energize** the OSCE by clarifying its role and goals, adjusting its ambitions to existing realities and adopting a common agenda on the way towards a Security Community.

Therefore the Chairmanship has swiftly launched the process by establishing an informal Helsinki +40 Working Group. At the core of this process lies a challenging task - to **strengthen trust and confidence** among participating States. We intend to be proactive in pursuing this goal.

Following an initial **phase of strategic debate**, the Helsinki +40 process has now moved into a new stage of **thematic debates**. In conjunction with the incoming Swiss and Serbian Chairs, we are seeking to build a **positive and balanced agenda** up to 2015, one that fosters constructive engagement while taking into account the interests and priorities of all participating States.

The first of these thematic debates, devoted to exploring the way forward in "developing a strategic approach to the OSCE **economic and environmental dimension**", took place on **14 June**. The meeting demonstrated a common ground on the need to enhance strategic orientation of the OSCE in responding to economic and environmental threats to security, and to utilize the potential of economic and environmental activities as confidence building measures.

The **next meeting**, planned for **mid-July**, will address the issue of strengthening the **effectiveness and efficiency of the OSCE**.

Let me stress once again it was a very **timely and apt decision** to address here in Istanbul the entire scope of issues in the light of the Helsinki +40 process. I reviewed the **draft reports and resolutions**, submitted to the Assembly by its three committees and found they were full of **interesting proposals and ideas** already at the present stage. I am confident their adoption will serve as a **good input** to our future activities within the process.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In 2013, the Ukrainian Chairmanship set ambitious goals with a number of priorities across the three dimensions of security.

Within the **politico-military dimension** we aim at updating and modernizing the OSCE politico-military instruments and strengthening our work in all elements of the conflict cycle.

We consider **conventional arms control** and **confidence building measures** as an important part of our common efforts to strengthen peace and security in the OSCE area. The Chairmanship is making efforts aimed at facilitating discussion on a future conventional arms control in Europe. We hope that this discussion will contribute to the consolidation of the political will required for the resolution of current problems in the functioning of the existing conventional arms control regime in Europe.

Ukraine is also actively working on updating the **OSCE Principles Governing Non-Proliferation**.

Protracted conflicts remain a source of tension and mistrust among participating States, and our Chairmanship has been fully engaged in ongoing negotiations.

We were encouraged by the agreement on further confidence measures reached at the latest “5+2” talks on the **Transdnestrian** settlement process, which were held in Odessa, and we stand ready to support its implementation. It is now vital that bilateral meetings of the parties continue in preparation for the next round of talks. **Political will** for mutual rapprochement at both banks of Dniester is key to finding lasting political solutions.

In the **South Caucasus**, Ukraine is fully committed to the **Geneva International Discussions**, aimed at solving pressing security and humanitarian issues related to the conflict in Georgia. The Ukrainian Chairmanship also lends its full support to the efforts of the OSCE **Minsk Group Co-Chairs** in assisting the parties to find a peaceful solution to the **Nagorno-Karabakh** conflict.

Furthermore, the Chairmanship is encouraging the sound implementation of the Ministerial Council decision on “OSCE’s efforts to address **transnational threats**”. People throughout the world are equally threatened by terrorism, organized international crime, trafficking in illicit drugs, chemical precursors and human beings. Recent **Annual Security Review Conference (ASRC)** in Vienna provided an excellent opportunity for a robust discussion on where the Organization stands in addressing these challenges. Our further plans are to organize **OSCE wide-conferences** on **counter-terrorism** and on combating **illicit drugs**.

During the ASRC meeting it was underlined that more should be done to address threats emanating from adjacent areas, in particular **Afghanistan**. The ongoing process of transition in the country and ISAF’s withdrawal in 2014 will continue to have security implications for the OSCE area. In this regard, the support that the OSCE provides for building the capacity of Afghan law enforcement officers and fostering co-operation with their Central Asian counterparts is of paramount importance.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Within the **Economic and Environmental Dimension**, the core theme of the Ukrainian Chairmanship is increasing stability and security by improving the **environmental footprint of energy-related activities**. Based on the results of the two preparatory meetings in Vienna and Kyiv, the discussions at the Economic and Environmental Forum in Prague in September could pave the way to achieving concrete deliverables at the Kyiv OSCE Ministerial at the end of the year.

Energy dialogue will be enhanced by the **joint initiative of the Presidents of Ukraine and Turkmenistan** on holding a **high-level OSCE Energy Conference**. The Chairmanship Conference under the theme “Energy Security and Sustainability – the OSCE Perspective” will be held in **Ashgabat on 17-18 October 2013**.

The Ukrainian Chairmanship is convinced that the **Human Dimension** is at the core of the concept of comprehensive security.

Earlier this month, an international high-level conference under the aegis of the Ukrainian OSCE Chairmanship on Combating Trafficking in Human Beings took place in Kyiv. The event was aimed at enhancing national capacities to successfully prosecute cases of all forms of trafficking in human beings, to provide adequate protection and assistance to trafficked persons and to increase the rate of prevention of this crime. The discussion testified a broad support of the Chairmanship’s proposal to elaborate an Addendum to the 2003 OSCE Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings.

This area of activity is also a great example of excellent **co-operation** with the Parliamentary Assembly, as demonstrated by the **workshop** on identifying victims of trafficking that was organized by Ukraine’s Ministry of Infrastructure in close co-operation with U.S. Congressman **Chris Smith**, your Special Representative on Human Trafficking Issues.

Strengthening **freedom of the media** also stands high on the Chairmanship’s agenda. An important contribution in this area was the Human Dimension Seminar held in Warsaw on 13 – 15 May on best practices of legal framework to establish and safeguard a free, independent and pluralistic media in the OSCE region.

We have also focused our attention on such issues as free movement of people, promotion of tolerance and non-discrimination, freedom of association and assembly, inter-religious dialogue in promoting freedom of religion or belief, as well as democratic elections and election observation.

In this regard, let me emphasize that your work on **election monitoring** – one of the OSCE hallmarks – is indispensable to the Organization. I hope that constructive cooperation and coherence in our activities in this area will further strengthen OSCE’s credibility in the sphere of election observation.

Assistance to our newest participating State of **Mongolia** is also in the focus of our attention. At the end of May the Chairmanship led a group of OSCE Representatives to Mongolia to identify potential areas where the OSCE could be helpful for Mongolia. The authorities of Mongolia demonstrated keen interest towards engagement with the OSCE. I also received a letter from my Mongolian counterpart with a request to examine a possibility of establishing an OSCE presence on the ground.

I cannot but mention recent request of **Libya** to be granted the status of the OSCE Partner for Co-operation. There is a common understanding that the security of the OSCE area is inextricably linked with security in the adjacent regions. We welcome Libya’s willingness to pursue positive engagement and cooperation with the OSCE and will **seek consensus** among the participating States in this respect.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The OSCE must translate a considerable **political momentum** that was generated at the 2010 Astana Summit into concrete progress toward realizing the ambitious vision of a Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian Security Community.

It was here, in Istanbul, during the 1999 Summit, that the OSCE leaders declared their “firm commitment to a free, democratic and more integrated OSCE area where participating States are at peace with each other, and individuals and communities live in freedom, prosperity and security”.

The reference to individuals and communities is particularly important. It emphasises the role of the OSCE in making the lives of the citizens of its region freer, safer and, on the whole, better.

Yet, we all recognize that more needs to be done to connect the OSCE to the public and civil society. The Parliamentary Assembly as the key institution linking us with our citizens can make a crucial contribution by helping us “reconnect”. From the Chairmanship side, we are also taking action. At the end of July, young people from across the OSCE region will gather for the **OSCE Youth Summit** in Crimea. The event aims to familiarize them with our Organization to promote the principles of tolerance and non-discrimination among the young generation.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is high time to revitalize the “**culture of engagement**” that inspired the signing of the Helsinki Final Act. In 1975, divergences among signatories were far greater than those among participating States today, yet still they managed to unite around a common notion of comprehensive security and a set of shared principles of enhancing relevance.

Let’s therefore use the upcoming anniversary of Helsinki as a chance to find **joint solutions** to the common challenges we face, and to provide **strategic direction** to the OSCE while continuing to seek **full implementation** of the extensive OSCE *acquis* developed over decades. Our Organization, our States and, ultimately, our citizens, cannot afford to miss this opportunity. I remain confident that Ukraine’s Chairmanship can continue to count on the Parliamentary Assembly’s support for advancing this important initiative.

Thank you and I wish you fruitful discussions.