

**Address by Ambassador Lamberto Zannier
Secretary General of the OSCE
to the
OSCE Parliamentary Assembly
Mediterranean Forum: “*Making the Mediterranean a Safer Place:
Creating an Area of Freedom, Security and Justice*”**

Dubrovnik, 9 October 2011

Introduction

- Thank you, President Efthymiou, for the invitation. I appreciate the opportunity to address the Assembly on this important topic.

- My remarks will focus on four areas:
 1. Why the OSCE is well placed to contribute to making the Mediterranean a safer place;
 2. The conditions and modalities for OSCE engagement;
 3. What has been done so far, and;
 4. Next steps and the potential role of Parliamentarians.

Why the OSCE is well placed to contribute

- There are **two main reasons** why the OSCE could be an ideal partner for countries in the Southern Mediterranean in their transitions to democracy:
 1. We have both an **effective venue for dialogue and a flexible mechanism for implementation**. The Mediterranean Contact Group, capably chaired this year by Ambassador O’Leary, provides a regular forum for exchanging information, views and ideas as well as for fostering our mutual knowledge

and trust. The Partnership Fund provides us with a flexible tool for implementing concrete joint co-operation projects.

2. The **OSCE's inclusive membership, which represents a broad range of experiences and approaches to democratic transformation.** It includes long-established democracies and countries with recent experience of democratic reform. It includes diverse cultures, including **many societies with Muslim majorities.** The OSCE has developed a flexible set of tools to assist this diverse community with the challenges of comprehensive security and democratic transition. Partners might find this experience and this toolbox interesting.

Conditions and modalities for an OSCE contribution

- However: **for the OSCE to be activated three conditions need to be met:**
 1. **A clear request should be received from the Partner state.**
 2. **A consensus decision by pS would have to be taken for the implementation of any activity outside of the OSCE territory.**
 3. **Adequate extra-budgetary resources would need to be made available to fund the activities.**
- With these caveats, let me reiterate that **the OSCE has always kept and will continue to keep its door open to the Partners,** sharing its experience through joint projects and initiatives, and supporting enhanced participation by representatives from the Partners in OSCE activities.

What has been done so far

- Last December, in Astana, OSCE Heads of State and Government acknowledged once more that the security of the OSCE region is **“inextricably linked”** to security in the Mediterranean region.
- They also **agreed to enhance the level of co-operation** with our Partners.
- The events that have unfolded since then have opened up new opportunities for such co-operation, even as they have highlighted its importance.
- In the dialogue initiated with **Tunisia, Morocco and Egypt**, also through a number of visits in various formats, to the region, **each country has expressed interest in the OSCE toolbox.**
- It is clear **that each country is unique in its culture, its priorities and path** that it chooses to take. Nevertheless, a number of **common areas** where OSCE experience could provide added value has been identified. These include **building democratic institutions, election support, media freedom, police reform, good governance and fighting corruption.**
- Of course, concrete activities will have to be **designed together** with each Partner country.
- I am personally committed to facilitating a continuous and open dialogue with Partner countries, as I did on the occasion of my recent visit to Cairo, on 5-6 September, when I met with government officials and **civil society actors.**

- During that visit, I also had a very constructive meeting with the new SG of the **League of Arab States**, Ambassador Nabil El Araby. I am convinced of the value of **co-operation with regional organizations** to ensure efficiency and ownership and I am committed to support this approach.
- Following requests expressed by civil society representatives on the occasion of our visits to the region, ODIHR, organized, at the end of July, a training on methodologies of human rights and elections monitoring for Egyptian NGOs. The Office is now organizing a training in domestic election observation for NGOs from Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia, to take place in a few days in Budva.

Next steps and potential role of Parliamentarians

- The Mediterranean Conference that will start tomorrow in Budva provides a good opportunity for exchanging views and generating ideas on the way forward.
- We have learned from our own experience that **democratic transitions are long-term processes**, which can suffer from delays and setbacks. Progress will require the joint effort of all sectors of society and the continuous support of the international community.
- For the OSCE's potential contribution to be fully appreciated on the southern shore of the Mediterranean, we need to make our Organization better known and to engage with all facets of society.

- This is where you, as **Parliamentarians**, can play a useful role.
- Through your daily contacts with **your constituents, your parliamentary colleagues, the media and with your governments**, you can play an **important role in building awareness** of the OSCE's values and of the usefulness of its rich experience.
- I look forward to hearing your views and ideas.
- Thank you