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Address to the OSCE Permanent Council

Vienna, 5 September 2002

Mr. Chairman,
Mr. Secretary General,
Distinguished Ambassadors,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

First, I would like to thank you for the invitation to address the Permanent Council this morning in order to report on the Assembly's Annual Session held in Berlin and to present the objectives of my Presidency of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly.

I am accompanied today by Mr. Urban Ahlin, the Chair of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Swedish Parliament, who is one of the most active leaders in the Assembly. We have also served together on the ad hoc committee on Transparency and Accountability, Chaired by Congressman Steny Hoyer of the US, a committee with which I am sure you are all familiar. One of the main reasons I asked Mr. Ahlin here today is that he has continuously expressed a keen interest in the response to our Annual Declaration by the members of the Permanent Council and you are all aware by the efforts made by Congressman Hoyer, former President Severin, and all of us to do what we can to ensure that annual dialogue on this subject takes place in this room after our Annual Session each year. So we look forward to your comments at the conclusion of my remarks.

I am also accompanied by the Secretary General of the Parliamentary Assembly, Mr. Spencer Oliver, who most of you know rather well. He has been involved in the OSCE and the CSCE for more than 25 years and, along with his very experienced staff in Copenhagen, provides the members of the Assembly with great expertise on all OSCE subjects. We are also joined today by Mr. Andreas Nothelle, a senior official in the German Bundestag, who will soon become our Permanent

Representative in the Assembly Secretariat's Vienna office, and by my presidential adviser, Mr. Gustavo Pallarés, who also has a wealth of experience in this field.

We look forward to working with the new Chairman of the Council, Ambassador Seixas, whom I met with yesterday, and we look forward to continuing our cooperation in the months to come.

The Portuguese Chairmanship of the OSCE has given great support to the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, and we very much appreciated the presence of the Chairman in Office, Foreign Minister Martins da Cruz, in our Annual Session. Parliamentarians showed great interest in his presentation and I believe the debate that followed was fruitful and enhanced the dialogue between the governmental and the parliamentary sides of our Organisation.

Mr. Chairman,

I was honoured to have been elected President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly for the coming year and to represent here the more than 300 parliamentarians from our 55 participating States. My experience in the CSCE / OSCE goes back many years.

I have been an active member of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly since its first gathering in Budapest in 1992, holding several offices including Rapporteur and Chair of its Political and Security Affairs Committee, Chairman of the Working Group on the Rules of Procedure, Vice-Chair of the ad hoc Committee on Transparency and Accountability, and Vice-President for three years.

During my active involvement in the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly I have focused in three main areas: Parliamentary oversight in Security and Defence issues, election monitoring, and the development of parliamentary dimension of the OSCE and its relations with the governmental side.

Today, more than ever, the OSCE needs to work for the implementation of the commitments of the OSCE participating States to ensure democracy, the rule of law and the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. The OSCE Parliamentary Assembly will do its part through parliamentary involvement in the activities of the OSCE, facilitating parliamentary dialogue and cooperation. This provides a vital link between governments and parliaments to join efforts in order that those fundamental commitments become realities for all our citizens. We must always strive to intensify our cooperation and our coordination in carrying out the important work of the OSCE.

Report on the Berlin Annual Session

Mr. Chairman,

The Berlin Declaration of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly – which you have all received - touched on a wide variety of topics, in addition to the central

theme of the Session -“Confronting Terrorism”. The wide range of interests of participants also resulted in resolutions dealing with various other topics.

Recommendations on Combating Terrorism

In recognition of the importance of improved information flow, many of the PA’s recommendations in this field were aimed at improving co-operation and co-ordination between organisations, states, and other actors. Information exchanges amongst states and OSCE experts is also encouraged, as well as between relevant financial intelligence units and law enforcement bodies.

On the parliamentary side, the Declaration calls for increased dialogue between national parliaments on effective legislative measures needed to help fight against terrorism, as well also for the OSCE PA to hold a conference with parliamentarians from the Organisation of Islamic Countries. In addition, the PA asks to be kept regularly informed on counter-terrorist activities carried out by the OSCE, and to this end the CiO’s Personal Representative for Terrorism will be invited to present a report to the next PA Session.

A number of other measures were also recommended. OSCE parliamentarians expressed their support for the Chairmanship’s initiative to create an OSCE Charter on Terrorism. The CiO is also called upon to create a trust fund to facilitate anti-terrorist activities. The Declaration encourages more effective border controls to prevent the movement of terrorists. Finally, in an ambitious undertaking, our parliamentarians agreed on the basic framework for a definition of terrorism.

Recommendations on Political and Security Issues

The participants once again expressed strong support for key OSCE documents in the politico-security field; the Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security, and the document on Small Arms and Light Weapons calls for prompt implementation of their measures. In line with this, the Declaration calls for protection of dangerous nuclear, biological, and chemical stocks, and for elimination where possible.

There were also several other areas which received attention in the Declaration. One topic addressed, which was recognised as important, despite not yet being a direct OSCE issue, was that of managing the export of dual-use goods.

The important issue of landmines also received substantial attention in a separate resolution calling for accession to and implementation of the measures in the Ottawa Treaty was urged in this resolution. I have another interest in this issue as one of the proposers of a Parliamentary Committee comprising Defence, Foreign Affairs, International Development and Trade Industry monitoring arms exports.

Recommendations on Economic and Environmental Issues

A general proposal directed towards work in the economic and environmental dimension urged greater inclusion of the private sector in this work. Also, the importance of education and re-training as a boost to economic transition was clearly recognised by the Assembly.

The Assembly urged states and international institutions to take effective measures to reduce poverty, with particular mention being made of increasing foreign development aid to the UN's target-level of 0.7% of GDP.

A number of issues regarding economic work and infrastructure in Southeast Europe were addressed, with specific reference to the Stability Pact.

Recommendations on Human Rights and Humanitarian Issues

OSCE parliamentarians reaffirmed their assertion that human rights cannot be betrayed under any circumstances, including in the fight against terrorism, and urged parliaments to vigilantly exercise their role of oversight during states of emergency.

The PA also addressed religious issues, calling for promotion of religious tolerance, stressing the need to fight against anti-Semitism.

Specific calls were directed towards the Belarussian authorities to stop harassment of the independent media, as well as other abuses.

Recommendations on Inter-Institutional Co-operation

As a forum for inter-parliamentary dialogue, the PA recognises the strengths of contacts and international co-operation, particularly with regard to the fight against terrorism. The Declaration calls upon the OSCE to reinforce ties with other international organisations in order to foster better co-ordination. Also, the importance of the economic aspect of combating terrorism is recognised in the call for co-operation with the Bretton Woods institutions in this fight.

Recommendations on Corruption and International Crime

Greater efforts to combat corruption and international crime were urged many times by the parliamentarians in Berlin. Co-operation amongst states was urged at the Foreign Minister level in a call for the Ministerial Council to convene a meeting of other relevant Ministers to consider this topic.

In particular the scourge of trafficking in human beings received great attention, and strengthening of legislation to counter this criminal activity was called for by the Parliamentarians. The need for legislation to deal with a wide range of aspects of this activity was stressed, including ensuring jurisdiction to prosecute nationals when these acts are committed abroad. The need for funding in countering trafficking was underlined.

Additionally, the need for vigorous law enforcement to counter hate-crimes, and in particular anti-Semitism, was stressed in the Declaration.

Recommendations on Gender Issues

Again this year, the issue of gender equality was discussed in the Assembly. Although the OSCE has made progress with regard to the overall number of women in the staff, the leadership positions remain male dominated. In fact, there are still no women among the leaders of the OSCE Institutions and only one out of twenty Heads of OSCE Missions are women. The OSCE Parliamentary Assembly once again recommends that this be corrected and that participating States be requested to put forward both male and female candidates to higher-level positions.

The Berlin Declaration recommends having experts on gender issues represented in the OSCE, and that gender-related issues should be considered and included when OSCE documents are negotiated. In this respect the Bucharest Plan of Action could be updated. The need for work in the parliamentary side of the OSCE was also recognised; the declaration urges balanced gender representation in parliamentary delegations.

Recommendations on Promoting Peace and Conflict Resolution

As always, OSCE parliamentarians showed their interest and concern in a wide number of issues related to conflict prevention. Some are specific, and some aim to deal with the more indirect root-causes of difficult situations.

Efforts for greater cross-cultural dialogue amongst young people was urged as a way of encouraging tolerance.

The PA urged continuation of efforts for dialogue regarding the situation in Moldova, and reaffirmed the PA's support in these efforts. As an act of good will, a strong appeal was made to the Transdniestrian authorities to release the remaining members of the 'Ilascu Group'.

Regarding the coming elections in FYR Macedonia, all parties were urged to help in ensuring a fair and stable election process.

Recommendations on Other Issues

A variety of other topics were also addressed by the parliamentarians. Amongst these, relations with Belarus featured prominently. The Declaration called upon the Belarussian authorities to live up to their OSCE obligations, to hold free and fair parliamentary elections, and to co-operate with the OSCE.

A clear statement of support for the UN's work in Kosovo was also included, in which the parliamentarians urged all parties in the city of Mitrovica to respect the UN's authority.

Future activities of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly

Mr. Chairman,

Allow me to outline the current activities of the Assembly:

Election Monitoring

The OSCE Parliamentary Assembly has continued to develop a particularly active programme for monitoring parliamentary elections. The presence of parliamentary observers at elections during transitional periods emphasizes the importance of legislatures as institutions that must provide a balance to executive authority. As parliamentarians are themselves directly elected public officials, local and international media often greatly value their observations.

The Co-operation agreement between the OSCE and the Parliamentary Assembly signed in 1997 between the Chairman in Office and the President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly has proven successful. As you know, the CiO normally designates a senior member of our Assembly, on our recommendation, as Special Coordinator to lead the OSCE Observation Mission. I have been myself appointed by several Chairpersons in Office to lead many important monitoring missions to various countries, including Albania, Georgia and Ukraine and also to Bosnia and Kosovo. I am very pleased by the appointment by Minister Martins da Cruz of our Vice-President Mr. Kiljunen, of Finland, to lead the Observation mission in the upcoming elections in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. The elections in Bosnia, scheduled for 5 October, will also be observed by the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly.

Field visits to OSCE Missions:

The Initiative of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly to visit OSCE field presences is designed to better understand the work of the OSCE and to determine ways in which the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly can better contribute to the work of the OSCE in the field. Parliamentarians have responded positively to this initiative in past visits to missions in the Baltics, the Caucasus and Central Asia, and the International Secretariat is in the process of preparing new visits for the coming months, including a visit to the OSCE's Mission in Azerbaijan for the Autumn.

The Assembly's Ad hoc Committees:

These committees continue to serve as an important tool in furthering the development of democracy and stability in the OSCE region. The Working Group on Belarus, the Parliamentary Team on Moldova, the Democracy Team on Kosovo, and the ad hoc Committee on Abkhazia (Georgia), greatly contribute to promoting political dialogue and seeking cooperation in areas of conflict. The groups have promoted in those different areas the respect for human rights and fundamental

freedoms, and the assistance in the development of the legal and democratic institutions and processes by providing advice to the parties in conflict on legal, constitutional, and political frameworks. One special input of these ad hoc committees is that they are composed of politicians who generally enjoy easy access to political decision-makers.

Economic Dimension:

The OSCE Parliamentary Assembly pays special attention to the economic and environmental dimension of the OSCE. I look forward to continuing the existing co-operation between the Parliamentary Assembly and the Co-ordinator for OSCE Economic and Environmental Issues. The Parliamentary Assembly, on the invitation of the Swiss Parliament, intends to hold its third sub-regional conference on economic issues next year in Bern. Parliamentarians have also contributed their expertise to the annual OSCE Economic Forum and its preparatory seminars, and will continue to do so.

Central Asia Trans Asian Forum (Kazakhstan, June 2003): Trans-Asian Parliamentary Conference

Similar to the Conference we are organizing in conjunction with the Spanish Parliament in October, which will focus on Mediterranean issues, the OSCE PA intends to organize a Trans-Asian Parliamentary Conference in Almaty next year. This Conference would also seek to bring regional issues and concerns – in this case those of the Eurasian dimension of the OSCE - to the attention of a greater number of parliamentarians throughout the OSCE area. The events and aftermath of 11 September 2001 have highlighted both the importance of security in Central Asia to security in the OSCE area as a whole as well as the need for increased dialogue among OSCE member governments and parliaments. This Conference could contribute to long-term security in the OSCE region by seeking to better coordinate the important resources that parliamentarians have at their disposal.

The OSCE Parliamentary Assembly has been working with the Parliament of the Republic of Kazakhstan, which has agreed to host the Conference, on setting the dates and making the appropriate preparations. We are now looking at June 2003 as the timing of the event.

Belarus

As you are certainly aware, the seat of the Belarusian delegation in our Assembly has been vacant since February 2001. The Standing Committee reviewed this issue once again in Berlin on 5 July and, following considerable discussion on the issue, decided to postpone the decision regarding the seating of the National Assembly until the Winter Session in February 2003.

The decision was not a rejection of the credentials of the Belarusian National Assembly, although the voting indicated that the Standing Committee did not wish to seat the Belarusian National Assembly without taking into consideration the lack of progress in the Belarusian authorities' implementation of OSCE commitments. The

discussion and subsequent voting also suggested that the Standing Committee expects that by the Winter Meeting there will have been a reasonable level of progress with respect to relations between the OSCE and Belarus, to include the restoration of the OSCE's presence in Belarus and continued cooperation with the OSCE PA Working Group on Belarus, and as concerns the four benchmarks formulated by the international community.

The Working Group on Belarus intends to renew its activity this Autumn, following forthcoming elections in Germany, Sweden and Latvia, the countries of three of the Working Group Members. It is my hope that the Belarusian authorities will engage in genuine cooperation with the Working Group and will take real and significant steps between now and next February toward meeting its OSCE commitments.

Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia:

Mr. Chairman,

I would like to inform the Permanent Council that a group of four Members of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly visited Skopje on 26-28 August, together with their colleagues from the Council of Europe, in order to assess the preparations of the election, to be held on 15 September. This visit took place at the initiative of the OSCE Mission to Skopje and it was led by our Vice-President, Professor Rita Süßmuth of Germany. It is essential for the future of the country, and for its further integration to the European structures, that the conduct of these first post-conflict elections will meet with the OSCE standards.

I was pleased to learn that Professor Süßmuth and her colleagues concluded that the Macedonian authorities have prepared themselves well for the elections and that the legal and administrative conditions seem to be in place. They also concluded that, in spite of a number of unfortunate incidents, the campaign has generally been constructive - so far. However, the parliamentarians expressed their concern about the tense political atmosphere and perceived feelings of insecurity. I would like to use this opportunity to join the pre-election mission of the Parliamentary Assemblies of the OSCE and the Council of Europe in their appeal to all political parties to continue working for constructive elections, to refrain from any inflammatory action and to fully honour the Ohrid Accords. The OSCE PA will, in close cooperation with the Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly and the European Parliament, and of course also with the ODIHR, participate in monitoring the forthcoming elections. It is of course essential that the international community will continue to support the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia in its difficult task to rebuild stability and inter-ethnic peace.

<u>Priorities of the Presidency:</u>

Mr. Chairman,

As President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly for the coming year it is my intention to continue working for the development of the Parliamentary Assembly as a reliable partner contributing to the success of the OSCE. Building on the progress made by my five predecessors, I will continue to develop our programme of OSCE Field Mission visits, continue to provide parliamentary leadership for election monitoring projects, continue to support the work of our ad hoc committees dealing with specific critical problems, continue to strengthen the dialogue between and among our own parliamentarians through the organisation of our meetings and conferences, and – most importantly – make every effort to increase the co-operation between the governmental structures of the OSCE and the more than three hundred elected parliamentarians that provide the OSCE with a firm democratic foundation.

I look forward to active participation in the OSCE Ministerial Troika, to addressing the Ministerial Council in Porto in December, and to bringing parliamentarians from your countries to Vienna for our Second Winter Meeting next February. I had a brief meeting with the Chairman-in-Office in Sweden last week and have accepted his invitation to come to Lisbon in the near future to agree on concrete ways to improve and ensure better co-operation between the governmental and parliamentary dimensions of the OSCE. I also hope to have the opportunity to come to Vienna from time to time and to participate in a Retreat similar to the one that was organised in Salzburg last year, if you think that would be useful.

I think that the Retreat was a useful exercise that produced good results. We look forward to Ambassador Kubis' presence in our Standing Committee to be held in Madrid next month to brief on the OSCE budget, a positive step which emerged from those discussions. The kind of dialogue and information that we seek is aimed at better co-operation, not a micro management of OSCE affairs or an attempt in any way to control the OSCE. Our objective is to provide all necessary support to the OSCE.

The OSCE Parliamentary Assembly's sub office, to open here in Vienna later this year, will enhance our cooperation by establishing closer links with the OSCE structures in Vienna, mainly the OSCE Secretariat and the Permanent Council. As you know, there has been intense work done to agree on a *Memorandum of Understanding* between the Chairmanship in Office and the Parliamentary Assembly with significant input from the Permanent Council and the Assembly's ad hoc Committee on Transparency and Accountability. I believe that we are ready to move forward with this agreement, and I hope we can soon sign it.

As I have said before, and will repeat again, the Parliamentary Assembly wants to be a reliable partner in the OSCE which continues to make a positive contribution to its further development and to the achievement of its noble goals.

We look forward to your comments and will be pleased to respond to them, and to any questions you may wish to put.

Thank you very much for your attention