



2012 Annual Security Review Conference

Opening Remarks by Ambassador O’Leary Chairperson of the OSCE Permanent Council Tuesday 26 June 2012

Introductory Remarks

Good morning colleagues, and on behalf of the Irish Chairmanship in Office of the OSCE, I would like to welcome you to the 2012 Annual Security Review Conference. I would particularly like to welcome to the Hofburg the many colleagues who have travelled to Vienna from our 56 capitals, as well as those who have come from the Partner States and from other international and regional organisations. I welcome too members of the press, who will join us for the statements by the keynote speakers.

The ASRC is the major annual event on the calendar of the OSCE’s Politico-Military Dimension. It provides an opportunity for us, mid way through the year, to review the security work undertaken by the Organisation and to enhance our security dialogue.

Over the next two and a half days, we will discuss different aspects of the OSCE’s security work, from combating transnational threats to preventing and resolving conflicts, from arms control and CSBMs to engagement with our Partners for Cooperation. In addition, this year the Conference was preceded by a very useful Security Days event organised by the Secretary General. I know that many of you attended this event and will have found it as useful as I did, and I know too that the Secretary General will touch on the results of this event in his remarks later on this morning.

The theme we have chosen for this year’s Conference is “Building the Security Community; Taking Stock and Looking Forward – A Building Blocks Approach”. At Astana, our Heads of State and Government committed to working together to fully realise the vision of a comprehensive, co-operative and indivisible security community throughout our shared OSCE area. Today, 18 months after the Astana Summit, we believe that there is value in taking stock of where we are now and to explore how we can use the many tools we already have available to us to achieve this security community. Our strong view is that there is an absence of political will to use the existing tools at our disposal. To overcome this, we hope that our discussions over the next few days will help us to reach a common understanding of where we are now and what we can agree to begin doing together to fully realise the security community, as mandated by our leaders. In this context, it is imperative that we move

forward where we can, rather than waiting for the “perfect day”. A good example of this approach is the proposal by proposal approach we have adopted to updating the Vienna Document.

The “Helsinki + 40” discussion that we have initiated with the participating States gives us the overall context within which we can apply the “building blocks” approach. The idea is to try to make progress in realising the common vision set out in the Astana Declaration by using the upcoming 40th anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act as a catalyst for future progress toward the Astana vision of a Security Community. That we have already identified future Chairmanships in Office out to the end of 2015 in the form of Ukraine for 2013, Switzerland for 2014 and Serbia for 2015, provides us with an added opportunity to develop the Helsinki + 40 concept.

The proposal is to build on the “V to V Dialogues” launched by the Lithuanian Chairmanship last year by adopting a “building blocks” approach to ensure that the Organization can move ahead. We believe that this approach has the potential to foster trust and help bridge differences, offering participating States a concrete opportunity to address all open issues in a constructive and result oriented manner.

The ASRC provides us with an ideal opportunity to examine the Politico-Military aspects of this issue, and I would encourage all of you to keep this framework in mind during our discussions.