

# FOREIGN POLICY OF BELGIUM: ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY AND CO-OPERATION IN EUROPE (OSCE)

## The Belgian Chairmanship of the OSCE in 2006

Background paper approved by the Council of Ministers on 3 December 2005

In 2006 Belgium will assume the Chairmanship of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE). This is the first time that this honour and responsibility has devolved upon our country. When the Belgian Government put forward its candidacy in 2003 for the OSCE Chairmanship in 2006, it was motivated by the desire to pursue an active foreign policy in Europe and around the world. This motivation remains unchanged. Our Chairmanship of the OSCE is a sign of our commitment to multilateralism and international co-operation on the European continent. It confirms the importance that we attach to this Organization and to the role it can play. It also confirms the importance that our country attaches to relations with the countries of Central Asia, the Caucasus and Eastern Europe.

This paper sets out the parameters and main themes of the Belgian Chairmanship of the OSCE in 2006. They may be adapted, where appropriate, depending on the decisions adopted by the Ministerial Council in Ljubljana on 5 and 6 December 2005.

### 1. The OSCE: its goal and its tasks

1.1 Belgium is assuming the Chairmanship of the OSCE *at a crucial moment* in the life of this Organization, which was created 30 years ago. The OSCE must adapt to circumstances that are not only new but also continue to evolve. The first task of a Chairmanship is to listen to its institutions and members. It is of the greatest importance that the effectiveness and integrity of the Organization be preserved.

1.2 The OSCE is *the largest regional co-operative security organization in the world*. It has 55 participating States extending “from Vancouver to Vladivostok”. It brings together the countries of North America, Europe and Central Asia, and is one of the pillars of the European security architecture.

1.3 The OSCE was established in 1975 with the signing of the Helsinki Final Act. This represented a turning point in the *détente* between what were then the Eastern and Western Blocs. The Organization was established as a conference (the CSCE) and as *a multilateral forum for dialogue and negotiation between East and West*. In signing the Helsinki Final Act, the parties subscribed to a number of political commitments that have been grouped together in three “baskets” or dimensions: politico-military security, economic and environmental co-operation, and the promotion of the rule of law and human rights.

1.4 With the end of the Cold War, the division between East and West disappeared and the CSCE gained fresh vigour. In 1990, the Charter for a New Europe was signed in Paris, calling upon the CSCE to play a role in managing the historic revolution taking place in Europe and in *assisting the new democracies* and new independent States in Eastern Europe

and Central Asia. To meet this challenge, the Conference was strengthened in 1994 to become an organization equipped with permanent institutions and operational instruments.

1.5 The basic principles remain unchanged. Today, the OSCE is still an organization *for security and co-operation*. Within the OSCE, security is a comprehensive concept that is shaped in the three aforementioned dimensions. Co-operation means that the 55 participating States are equal and that the decision-making process is based on consensus.

1.6 For several years now, the OSCE has found itself in a complicated situation. It is questioning its future, the nature of its missions and ultimately its *raison d'être*, especially in a Europe profoundly transformed by the fact that the Helsinki objectives of 1975 have been largely achieved. *Political co-operation* has taken the place of coexistence. Stability is no longer based on a fragile military balance but on a common body of doctrines and shared democratic principles enshrined in the constitutions of the participating States.

1.7 The challenge is no longer that of defining new common principles, but rather of applying them in everyday life and thereby establishing democratic institutions capable of guaranteeing their implementation. This is a question of will, of time and more especially of shared responsibility. This *responsibility* lies at the very heart of our commitments. All of the participating States have, after all, accepted that the *commitments* regarding the human dimension directly and legitimately concern each of them. That being the case, their implementation is no longer exclusively an internal matter for the State concerned.

1.8 However, in the Europe of today the relevance of the OSCE does not simply boil down to just the dimension concerning rights and freedoms — the third basket. The progress made in the area of security and economic affairs, even if this is due above all to the European Union and to the extension of the association agreements with it, does nothing to diminish the need to maintain and, where necessary, re-establish a certain *balance* between the three dimensions so that the OSCE can fully play its role in strengthening the democratic institutions that are ultimately the best guarantee for security in the general sense.

1.9 The risk of a major military conflict is no longer hanging over Europe, but *other threats* have appeared: terrorism, transnational and organized crime, illegal migration, and all kinds of illicit trafficking, including trafficking in human beings. Other factors must be taken into account in order to ensure the durability and coherence of the OSCE, such as the importance of Eurasia and the Caucasus in an organization focused initially on Central Europe. This has led to a geostrategic shift and to the emergence of an “Asian” problem and sensitivity in an essentially Western context.

1.10 By and large Europe is at peace, but *conflicts* inherited from the past, notably the “frozen” conflicts (Moldova-Transdniestria, Nagorno-Karabakh, and Georgia-South Ossetia-Abkhazia), are, in the absence of a lasting solution, threatening if not European security then at least subregional security. These conflicts are as much a danger to young democracies as sources of economic stagnation and contagion. First and foremost, solutions are achieved through an agreement between the parties themselves and a greater will on the part of the principal regional actors, including Russia.

1.11 On its own, the OSCE has neither the authority nor the means to impose a solution. It is not an organization able to impose peace under the terms of Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations. But it must, on the other hand, provide the framework for and facilitate

the emergence of a solution if the will to negotiate genuinely exists among the principal parties involved.

1.12 Lastly, the OSCE is only *one organization among many* that are operating in one form or another in Europe and that all have their *raison d'être*: the European Union, NATO, the Council of Europe, the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and, of course, the United Nations at the top of the pyramid. It is not an easy task to ensure the complementarity of all of these institutions, whose competences sometimes overlap, but this is one of the tasks of the Chairmanship.

## **2. The reform of the OSCE**

2.1 Europe and the world have changed, but the OSCE has largely remained what it was. This explains *the criticisms that have been heard with increasing frequency over the last few years in Russia* and among its allies in the CIS. These accuse the OSCE of a discriminatory approach inspired by an underlying Western ideology that systematically pillories them. Others, including our country, regret that obstacles prevent full use being made of the OSCE's tools, especially in the human dimension.

2.2 At the institutional level, many things must change. It will be necessary to bring the Organization's missions up to date and to ensure a better balance between the three baskets — human, economic and politico-military.

2.3 In order to respond to the crisis within the OSCE and to the divergent and frequently contradictory appeals for greater effectiveness and balance, a *Panel of Eminent Persons* was set up in 2005, which has produced a report and recommendations regarding institutional reform. The work of this Panel and the intense consultations among the principal actors have produced a positive momentum. Thanks to this momentum, we hope that the debate on reform will reach its first conclusions at the Ministerial Council meeting on 5 and 6 December in Ljubljana, in the form of some immediate measures and in particular a mandate (road map) for subsequent reform. It will be the task of the Belgian Chairmanship in 2006 to implement the Ljubljana decisions and to continue the process of reform.

2.4 Institutional reform goes hand in hand with a revision of the *scales of contributions* that determine the contribution of each participating State to the OSCE budget. The total regular budget of the OSCE is rather modest when compared to that of other international organizations and amounts to around 170 million euros per year. The current allocation formula is being called into question by Russia, in particular, which wants to link the scales of contributions to the contributory capacity of the participating States (on the basis of their gross domestic product). An agreement on this revision is urgently needed. We hope that such an agreement can be reached in time for the Ministerial Council meeting in Ljubljana.

2.5 Despite the discussion about institutional reform and the revision of the budget, it is our belief that the OSCE still offers added value and contributes to ensuring security in Europe in a way that no other organization does. It has characteristics that no other organization possesses:

— All the countries of North America, Europe and Central Asia belong to it;

- A unique approach to security in Europe, which is based on co-operation among equal partners and which integrates the politico-military, economic and environmental, and human dimensions;
- A tradition of dialogue and consensus-building;
- A set of instruments and recognized experience in conflict prevention and the promotion of democratization, and an extensive operational network of field missions.

### **3. Dialogue and co-operation with the OSCE's partners, the international community and civil society.**

3.1 The first task of each Chairmanship is to ensure the smooth functioning of the Organization and to safeguard its continuity. In an organization with a decision-making process based on consensus among its 55 participating States, the Chairmanship must first of all play the role of *honest broker*, an actor capable of serving the interests and meeting the expectations of all the members. Dialogue and understanding among all the participating States, both their governments and their permanent missions to the OSCE in Vienna, are of crucial importance for each Chairmanship.

3.2 The OSCE is a network of bodies, institutions and special representatives. *Dialogue and understanding* with each of them is of no less importance for our Chairmanship. The OSCE has a rather modest Secretariat compared to other international organizations. It has appointed a new Secretary General, Mr. Marc Perrin de Brichambaut, in whom it has invested much hope. The Belgian Chairmanship will also want to rely on the support of the other institutions, namely the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (entrusted among other things with election monitoring), the High Commissioner on National Minorities, the Representative on Freedom of the Media and, lastly, the Special Representatives of the Chairmanship for tolerance and combating trafficking in human beings. The Chairmanship will also foster dialogue and co-operation with the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly.

3.3 The OSCE is itself *part of a larger network*, namely the international community. It is a regional organization under the terms of the Charter of the United Nations and is involved in carrying out United Nations mandates. Furthermore, it is part of the European architecture, the other main pillars of which are the European Union, NATO and the Council of Europe. During our Chairmanship, we would like to strengthen *relations between the OSCE and these other institutions* and, at the same time, to indicate to them our willingness to co-operate on a more solid basis. We will make a particular effort to intensify dialogue and co-operation between the OSCE and the European Union.

3.4 An organization like the OSCE, which attaches great importance to the rule of law and respect for human rights, cannot limit its work to diplomatic activities between governments. It must also *interact with the citizens*. The OSCE has been developing relations with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) since its beginnings. The Belgian Chairmanship intends to foster these relations.

3.5 Through information and dialogue, the Government also wishes to involve the Belgian people and their representatives in *Parliament* in the activities of our Chairmanship. From the start of our Chairmanship we intend to make our programme available not only to our partners within the OSCE but also to Parliament and, through NGOs and the media, to the general public in our country. When subjects concerning the OSCE affect the competences of the *communities and regions*, we shall not hesitate to hold the necessary consultations.

#### **4. Priorities of the Belgian OSCE Chairmanship**

4.1 While the tasks relating to the institutional aspects are more or less fixed, the programme of the Chairmanship may be divided into a political agenda, which includes crisis management, and a practical agenda covering the management of the Organization and a number of particular points of emphasis or focuses that the Chairmanship wishes to give to this management. The priorities of the Chairmanship are based on the idea of continuity. Our current agenda is thus partly dictated by the decisions inherited by the Chairmanship.

4.2 The *political agenda* is directly influenced by the political situation and is thus to a large extent unforeseeable. This calls for adaptability on the part of the Chairmanship and an ability to react quickly, i.e. to mobilize the required working instruments at short notice and, to this end, to achieve the necessary consensus, preferably in concert with other organizations.

4.3 The *practical agenda* offers greater scope for manoeuvrability. At this level we can ourselves determine the points of emphasis that we wish to concentrate on. It is a question here of vision, but also of feasibility. We will have to ensure that we have sufficient support for our programme.

4.4 Regarding the *priorities* of the Belgian OSCE Chairmanship, the Government has *four major thrusts*. In the first instance, Belgium will have to play an active role in the institutional reform of the OSCE. Second, in the interests of achieving a better balance between the baskets, our Chairmanship will have to devote its attention to strengthening the economic dimension and to endeavouring to introduce into the OSCE the co-operation mechanism of the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe, particularly with regard to transport.

Third, combating international crime and promoting the *rule of law* will be of central importance during our Chairmanship. This is an issue that the average citizen feels affected by. We will co-operate in this area with other departments, notably those of the Interior and of Justice.

Finally, our country, as holder of the *Chairmanship*, will make a constructive contribution to the resolution of “frozen” conflicts.

#### **5. The human dimension**

5.1 Within the OSCE, the human dimension stands for democracy, good governance, and the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. Certain countries are resentful of the attention paid by the OSCE to this dimension, which they interpret as a criticism of their

policies. Some countries, including Russia, accuse the OSCE institutions and Western countries of applying double standards and thus of focusing especially on the countries “east of Vienna”.

5.2 It will be our task to keep these countries on board without compromising the OSCE’s norms and values (and the mechanisms to develop them), while convincing them that the OSCE offers co-operation and assistance in democracy building and good governance in all OSCE countries based on the values and norms to which all OSCE participating States have subscribed.

5.3 The Belgian Chairmanship will be putting forward a programme that will focus renewed attention on the key elements of the human dimension. At the top of the agenda will be the *rule of law*, since the proper functioning of the rule of law is contingent on respect for the norms and values. The judicial system plays an important role in this context. The Belgian Chairmanship is planning a series of activities concerning the proper functioning of the penal system with a number of specific focuses: prevention of torture, detention policy, independence of the judiciary and the training of judges.

5.4 Of greater relevance to the citizens, the issue of *legal assistance* will also be developed, since by facilitating access to legal assistance the right to justice can be transformed into the actual practice of justice. The Belgian experience of “boutiques de droit” (legal advice and mediation centres) could be of great relevance here.

5.5 *Good governance* through democratic institutions is closely linked with the rule of law. The OSCE has built up a good deal of experience in the development of democratic institutions, particularly in the Balkans. The lessons learned from these specific OSCE experiences could be consolidated to provide a guideline for future challenges that might arise. This is also in line with Belgium’s foreign policy and with its own national experience of civilian crisis management through the development of political, administrative and legal institutions.

It is an ambitious and high-calibre programme that can succeed only if there is consensus within the OSCE and over a period that will extend beyond the Belgian Chairmanship. We hope to provide the stimulus to set this process in motion.

5.6 One issue of relevance to the development of democratic institutions is on the short-term agenda: *election monitoring*. In this regard the OSCE’s election monitoring missions make the Organization highly visible and respected. Although controversial on occasion, the issue is and remains politically relevant. The institutions responsible for election monitoring are the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) and the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly. We intend during our Chairmanship to play the role of honest broker so that the observation missions can carry out the work for which they are set up, that of providing impartial aid in the development of democratic institutions.

5.7 We shall be organizing a seminar for the Belgian public in Brussels in 2006 on the OSCE election monitoring missions with a view to increasing Belgian participation in such missions. A special event will also be organized on the new technologies and their relation to democracy (e-voting, e-governance).

5.8 *Civil society* has a crucial role to play in the development of democratic institutions, good governance and respect for human rights. The role of NGOs is not always self-evident in this respect. We shall be organizing activities to address this problem and to foster co-operation between the OSCE and civil society.

5.9 The Belgian Chairmanship will also devote attention to *freedom of the media*. Through their critical discussion, the media contribute to the development of democracy and human rights. Freedom of the media and freedom of expression are essential prerequisites in this respect. The Belgian Chairmanship will draw attention to the protection of the confidentiality of journalistic sources. (Belgium has played a pioneering role in this area following the approval of a law in early 2005.) We shall also encourage the development of OSCE twinning projects between media actors from different OSCE countries.

5.10 A second specific theme that we shall be spotlighting is *tolerance and non-discrimination*. A number of OSCE events in the past have been devoted to this issue. The time has come to translate these commitments into practical results. Our Chairmanship will organize expert activities focusing on implementation. We intend to continue to support and guide the work of the OSCE Special Representatives on combating anti-Semitism, discrimination against Christians and members of other religions, and discrimination against Muslims, respectively.

5.11 *Combating trafficking in human beings* is an important issue for the OSCE and has long been a priority in our country. Almost all OSCE countries are confronted by this abhorrent practice, be it as countries of origin, destination or transit. Together we have a large number of assets for managing this problem and Belgium's expertise could well be of utility. During our Chairmanship, we shall take initiatives and support the OSCE in combating trafficking in children, in identifying and reintegrating victims, in policy assessment and in penalizing the perpetrators of trafficking in human beings and the persons commissioning such trafficking.

## **6. Economics and the environment**

6.1 The economic and environmental dimension of the OSCE is part of the comprehensive security concept but has received less attention than the other dimensions. The Belgian Chairmanship intends to *give a new stimulus* to co-operation in the economic and environmental fields within the OSCE. The main focus during our Chairmanship will be transport.

6.2 It is not our intention to involve the OSCE literally in the construction of bridges and roads. This cannot be the aim, given the fact that the OSCE has neither the financial resources nor the expertise in an area in which other organizations and institutions specialize.

6.3 Based on the observation that conflicts and tensions in the OSCE region go hand in hand with obstacles to trade and transport and in the belief that economic co-operation and integration can contribute to regional security, we regard the OSCE as a *forum* for all the countries concerned in which problems can be discussed and solutions found. More specifically, we shall attempt to introduce into the OSCE the logic of co-operation and the mechanisms of the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe. Transport is a suitable and pragmatic vehicle in this respect, all the more so as it can also become "a risk to security"

(terrorism, illegal migration, trafficking in human beings, drug trafficking, etc.) and can endanger the environment at the same time.

6.4 The ideas and proposals arising out of discussions within the OSCE could act as a catalyst for national authorities and other international organizations.

6.5 The *issue of transport* will be handled in two parts: regional co-operation and transport security.

- Regarding *regional co-operation*, the focus will be placed on the Balkans, the Southern Caucasus and Central Asia. Many other international organizations are active in these regions, notably the European Commission, but also the World Bank, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, the United Nations, the Asian Development Bank and others. It is not the OSCE's intention to duplicate or obstruct the work of these organizations. It could, however, be useful within the OSCE to map the various existing activities and hence to identify gaps or even niches in which the OSCE could provide specific stimulus. The OSCE could be mandated to conduct studies on this issue, with particular attention being paid to the problem of landlocked countries.

An important partner for the Belgian Chairmanship in this respect will be the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE). This agency has elaborated a number of legal instruments for harmonizing and implementing transnational transport networks. We intend to offer our full support for this project within the political forum that the OSCE provides.

- Regarding *transport security*, we intend to continue the existing OSCE initiatives such as container security and to supplement them with new ideas such as monitoring transport security through the use of labels and security safeguards, satellite navigation systems, etc.

6.6 As in other OSCE areas, our method will be based on dialogue and co-operation between the OSCE participating States and external partners. We shall provide stimulus and put the process on track. The appointment of our fellow-countryman *Bernard Snoy* as Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities within the OSCE Secretariat gives us an important asset in ensuring the progress of this work.

## **7. Politico-military security**

7.1 The OSCE's politico-military dimension was a key instrument in *détente* when Europe was still divided into two blocs. The OSCE has sought to increase military security in Europe by encouraging openness, transparency and co-operation between participating States. To this end, it has developed a set of *security and confidence-building measures*.

7.2 The Treaty on *Conventional Armed Forces in Europe* (CFE) has resulted in an unprecedented process of disarmament and arms control. It remains the sole example in the world of "co-operative security". A system of information exchange and regular verifications ensures that it remains effective.



7.3 This set of commitments and norms still forms the heart of the OSCE's politico-military dimension. At the Ministerial Council meeting during our Chairmanship at the end of 2006 we will be able to verify whether the instrument continues to function in a satisfactory manner.

7.4 *There has, however, been a change in the nature of the threats* during the last few years. The OSCE's current strategy identifies politico-military threats to "destabilization through the accumulation of conventional arms, illicit arms transfers and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction" involving non-State actors. Among the threats requiring particular attention are armed threats by terrorists and other armed groups.

7.5 Through their adherence to the Principles Governing *Non-Proliferation* adopted in 1994, the OSCE participating States sent out an important political signal. Since that time, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction outside the OSCE area has been a cause of growing concern. There is a need to strengthen this signal and to determine whether the time has come for participating States to reaffirm their willingness to combat proliferation.

7.6 Disarmament, the exchange of information and the verifications in the 1980s and 1990s related to heavy weapons such as tanks, artillery and aircraft. In the past few years, the OSCE has focused on other types of arms supplied for use in conflicts and civil wars and by organized crime networks, i.e. *small arms and light weapons*. There has been considerable trafficking in these arms that the OSCE would like to help curb. Combating illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons is a priority for the OSCE and a pioneering task that is still in its infancy. The set of eight Best Practice Guides published in 2003 represents a valuable reference work for States.

7.7 This matter and others relating to the politico-military security dimension are dealt with within the OSCE by the *Forum for Security Co-operation (FSC)*. It is a body for dialogue in which all OSCE participating States take part with a four-monthly rotating chairmanship. Our country takes over the chairmanship of the FSC in the last months of 2005. It will not be chairman in 2006. During the OSCE Chairmanship we shall endeavour to maintain serious dialogue on questions of security co-operation with the chairs of the FSC and shall assist them in the smooth running of the FSC's activities, in particular through the organization of a *seminar on military doctrines* and a review of the non-proliferation directives.

7.8 Another important issue is the *ratification of the revised CFE Treaty*. In the view of the NATO partners concerned, this ratification calls for the implementation of the Istanbul commitments, in other words the withdrawal of Russian troops and military equipment from Georgia and Moldova/Transdniestria. A withdrawal agreement has already been concluded with Georgia.

7.9 *A seminar on military doctrines* will be held under our Chairmanship in February 2006. It is the fifth seminar of its type held by the OSCE. Its aim is to review the changes in military doctrines resulting from new threats, changing forms of conflict and the development of new technologies. The impact of these changes on armed forces and defence structures will be discussed. The seminar is an important event for our Chairmanship and also for the development of the politico-military dimension and the central role played by the OSCE in confidence-building between participating States.

7.10 We shall focus particularly during our Chairmanship on the link between environmental and security issues. More specifically, we shall endeavour to extend the co-operation model between international organizations involved in the project for the destruction of dangerous chemicals in Moldova. This ENVSEC (environmental security) project, which Belgium already fully supports, is a joint project by the OSCE, United Nations and NATO.

## 8. Terrorism

8.1 Terrorism is also recognized by the OSCE as one of the greatest new threats. In 2001, the OSCE drafted its own *Plan of Action* for Combating Terrorism as part of the international fight against terrorism conducted by the United Nations. The United Nations conventions and protocols and the Security Council resolutions form the universal legal framework within which the fight against terrorism is conducted. The OSCE participating States have undertaken to ratify and implement these United Nations conventions and protocols.

8.2 The OSCE goes even further, however. Its classic activities — the promotion of human rights, tolerance, multiculturalism and freedom of the media, strengthening the rule of law, combating trafficking in human beings and illicit drug and arms trafficking — are also designed to *prevent* terrorism.

8.3 The OSCE has also taken a number of specific decisions regarding *container security* and the security of travel documents.

8.4 Within the OSCE Secretariat a special unit, the *Action against Terrorism Unit* (ATU), has been created as a co-ordinating point to facilitate all of the OSCE's anti-terrorism activities. This unit also has the task of supervising the implementation of existing United Nations instruments and of providing technical assistance to participating States in the fight against terrorism.

8.5 To avoid the duplication of activities and to ensure effective communication between participating States, the ATU, experts in the various capitals and the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Committee (CTC), a *Counter-Terrorism Network* has also been created within the OSCE.

8.6 The Belgian Chairmanship is determined to pursue and supplement all these activities within the OSCE. Not all of the United Nations conventions have yet been implemented by all OSCE participating States. Moreover, the various different criminal procedures and national legislations need to be further harmonized. We are in favour of a Model Law on Extradition within the framework of the OSCE similar to the one elaborated by the United Nations. We also intend to strengthen co-operation with other international organizations such as the Council of Europe and NATO. In co-operation with the ATU, the Belgian Chairmanship would like to pay greater attention to the effective follow-up of working groups and seminars dealing with the fight against terrorism.

8.7 Within the OSCE, we also aim to ensure that the fight against terrorism is not detrimental to the rule of law or *respect for human rights* and fundamental freedoms.

## 9. Organized crime

9.1 Alongside terrorism, transnational crime is one of the most serious *new threats* to our society. The extent of this threat was recognized in the outcome declaration following the United Nations Summit of Heads of State or Government in September 2005. The European security strategy of “a secure Europe in a better world” also lists organized crime as one of the most serious threats.

9.2 During its OSCE Chairmanship in 2006, Belgium will make the fight against organized crime one of its *priority concerns*. This problem affects all OSCE countries in both the West and the East. The approach to the problem also goes beyond the individual OSCE dimensions and is an issue that affects ordinary citizens as well.

9.3 The fight against organized crime is not a new issue for the OSCE, as can be seen from the Organization’s plans and activities to combat trafficking in human beings (including organized illegal migration), illicit trade in arms and drugs, the laundering of funds to finance criminal activities, and corruption. The OSCE’s efforts to improve border control and management also helps, as do the various activities and programmes designed to strengthen the rule of law, including those aimed at the police and judiciary.

9.4 The OSCE has various *instruments* including a Special Representative and a unit within the Secretariat to combat trafficking in human beings, and a strategic police unit which provides assistance in the field in police training. The tasks of the office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities also include combating money-laundering and corruption.

9.5 Our Chairmanship will endeavour to consolidate this *acquis* and, at the same time, to give *new impetus* to the OSCE’s activities. We hope that the OSCE as a security organization will be able to respond more adequately to our citizens’ needs.

9.6 International crime is a complex phenomenon. It cannot be addressed satisfactorily without a thorough understanding of it. Our country is familiar with the development of *risk and threat assessments*, which identify specific risks and threats on the basis of a tried and tested methodology involving the analysis at the outset of data provided by different departments. During our OSCE Chairmanship, we hope to encourage the use of professional *threat assessments*. Given the fact that our approach explicitly allows for a major contribution by departments other than the traditional law-enforcement agencies and that we are aware of the vulnerability of the legal economy, this issue is of particular relevance to the OSCE.

9.7 Belgium would like first of all to initiate dialogue within the OSCE on the analysis of threats. It is probably unrealistic within the framework of the OSCE to consider making a complete analysis of the threats. It should nevertheless be possible to rally the participating States to this issue, to convince them of the importance of an analysis of this type and to identify common elements. In synergy with existing international efforts, we must also focus on increasing capacities for conducting such analyses in a number of countries by way of training and technical assistance.

9.8 Apart from understanding the problem correctly, the implementation of an appropriate set of legal instruments is also of great importance. The authoritative legal instrument is the

United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime of 2002, known as the *Palermo Convention*. The *ratification* and *implementation* of this Convention are a major priority. The OSCE offers a useful framework for providing political support for ratification and specific support to ensure that the Convention is implemented by the OSCE participating States. We shall also collaborate closely with the United Nations for this purpose.

9.9 Over the years, the Council of Europe has also developed an impressive arsenal to combat criminality. During our OSCE Chairmanship, we intend to encourage the ratification and implementation of these instruments and to include on the agenda the possibility of closer collaboration with the Council of Europe.

9.10 Combating organized crime cannot be a matter for the police alone. The wider context of the penal system is also of great importance. *Properly functioning rule of law* is an integral component of the fight against organized crime and at the same time ensures that this fight is conducted correctly with respect for legal rules and human rights.

9.11 The OSCE already conducts *police assistance* activities through the Strategic Police Matters Unit (SPMU) in Vienna and through the training of police officers in academies and in the field. We hope that during our Chairmanship we shall be able to consolidate and strengthen the experience acquired with regard to police training and the SPMU's capacities within the institutional structure of the OSCE.

9.12 The OSCE conducts activities relating to the judicial system, primarily through the ODIHR's Rule of Law Unit in Warsaw. We intend to collaborate with OSCE participating States and the ODIHR to establish the basic principles and norms of the *penal system*. The training of judges is important from an operational point of view and we shall endeavour to continue the existing forms of exchange and assistance within the OSCE and to develop them if possible. For organized crime to be effectively countered, the judiciary needs to be professional and independent.

9.13 The *carrying out of sentences* is a subject that deserves greater attention within the OSCE. For the penal system to function properly, sentences need to be carried out effectively and impunity combated. International norms and agreements could also facilitate co-operation between countries in the carrying out of sentences.

9.14 In order to combat a transnational phenomenon, co-operation between countries at both the international and the regional level and between institutions is of the utmost importance. During our Chairmanship we shall encourage international legal co-operation between OSCE participating States, particularly with regard to the *exchange of information* and *protection of personal data*. Regional co-operation is also of great importance. Belgium will encourage greater collaboration by both the police and the judiciary in the countries of a particular region.

9.15 A number of international actors operate in this area, including the United Nations, the Council of Europe, the European Union and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. Dialogue and co-operation with these actors are required. The Belgian Chairmanship will participate actively in this *dialogue* and *co-operation*.

9.16 We cannot put into practice our proposals and ideas for combating organized crime without the agreement and co-operation of all our partners within the OSCE. This will be a

*long-term task*. During our Chairmanship we hope to give new impetus to this task, pursuing the course already embarked upon by the OSCE and without detriment to the OSCE's *acquis* within the human dimension. Respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms and the principles of the rule of law are and remain inviolable values for the OSCE, even in the fight against organized crime.

## **10. Regional conflicts: prevention and resolution**

10.1 The OSCE is more than an organization that transforms norms and values into political commitments, which it then monitors through review conferences and follow-up mechanisms.

10.2 It is also an *operational organization with missions in many countries*. The Organization opened its first mission in Kosovo in September 1992. In 2005 it had missions in 16 countries — in the Balkans, across Eastern Europe and as far as the Caucasus and Central Asia.

10.3 The core task of all the OSCE missions is the *creation of a stable and secure environment* by way of support and democratization, promotion of the rule of law, stimulation of political dialogue and construction of peace.

10.4 Moreover, the OSCE as a regional security organization is an *active mediator* in conflict prevention and resolution. In many cases, the Chairmanship is the OSCE body representing the Organization. We shall endeavour to ensure that the OSCE can play its role among international actors to the full.

10.5 During its Chairmanship, *Belgium would like to make a constructive contribution* to the efforts undertaken by the international community. Special focuses will include Kosovo and the “frozen” conflicts in Moldova-Transdnistria, Nagorno-Karabakh and Georgia-South Ossetia.

## **11. Kosovo**

11.1 In terms of size (around 1,000 staff) and mandate, the OSCE Mission in Kosovo (OMIK) is the most important of the OSCE's missions today. In collaboration with the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), the OSCE Mission makes a significant contribution to reconstruction in Kosovo. It focuses among other things on democratization, respect for human rights, elections, police training and administrative support.

11.2 Particular attention will have to be devoted to the Kosovo issue by the Belgian Chairmanship. First, there is the question of the *future status* of Kosovo. In 2003, UNMIK defined the *standards* that must be attained before a definitive status can be determined. These standards refer amongst other things to the functioning of democratic institutions, the rule of law and the return of refugees. They have been implemented in part. It was recently decided to start negotiations under the leadership of the United Nations negotiator Maarti Ahtisaari, former President of Finland, on the future status of Kosovo.

11.3 During the Belgian Chairmanship, the OSCE's task will be to encourage the further implementation of these standards and to contribute, in collaboration with other international actors, to the elaboration and application of the future status. We shall endeavour to ensure that the OSCE can *play its role to the full* in this respect among the other international agencies concerned.

11.4 In this context, there will be a need to evaluate the future role of the OSCE Mission in Kosovo. The United Nations mission (UNMIK) is planning to cease operations for good by the end of 2006, which will result in the transfer of tasks and competences to other organizations, including the European Union and the OSCE. Increased dialogue and close collaboration between the European Union and the OSCE will be indispensable to the future of Kosovo.

## **12. Moldova**

12.1 The OSCE plays an important role as a mediator between the parties and regarding the determination of the status of Transdniestria, which has seceded from Moldova. These negotiations have been conducted since 1992 in a five-sided framework consisting of the OSCE, Russia and Ukraine as mediators together with the parties to the conflict, namely Moldova and Transdniestria. At the end of 2005, the European Union and the United States of America were included in the negotiations.

12.2 Recent initiatives, including one by the Ukrainian President Viktor Yushchenko and the more active role played by Russia, have reawakened hopes that the stalemate might be broken. During its Chairmanship, Belgium hopes to make a constructive contribution to the negotiations on the future status of Transdniestria.

## **13. Nagorno-Karabakh**

13.1 It was possible in 2005 to speak for the first time of a *rapprochement* between Armenia and Azerbaijan on the question of Nagorno-Karabakh. The Presidents of the two countries met during the Council of Europe summit in Warsaw and the CIS summit in Kazan. The Nagorno-Karabakh peace process is being driven by the Minsk Group consisting of the United States of America, Russia and France. This Group is supported in the field by the OSCE mission, which has the task of helping to resolve the conflict.

13.2 During its Chairmanship of the OSCE, Belgium is determined to build on the *progress* made and to encourage Armenia and Azerbaijan to find a solution.

## **14. Georgia**

14.1 In the early 1990s, the territories of Abkhazia and South Ossetia seceded from the central authorities of Georgia. The United Nations plays a crucial role in the attempts at conciliation with Abkhazia. Regarding *South Ossetia*, this central role is played by the OSCE. The OSCE Mission to Georgia is involved in the dialogue between South Ossetia and Georgia, which takes place within the Joint Consultative Group (JCG).

14.2 Here, too, positive developments were observed in 2005. Russia and Georgia found common ground and were able to conclude an agreement regarding Russian military bases in Georgia. The peace plan proposed by the Government of Georgia for South Ossetia deserves our attention. At the same time, the OSCE is conducting an economic needs assessment. The Belgian Chairmanship would like to make its contribution and is considering organizing a *donor conference* in 2006. By offering the parties an economic perspective, the OSCE hopes to be able to inject new impetus into the political process with regard to South Ossetia.

## **15. Central Asia**

15.1 For centuries, Central Asia has formed a link between Europe and Asia. Events in Central Asia escalated in 2005. In *Kyrgyzstan* a new government took office, and in Uzbekistan an insurrection was bloodily suppressed.

15.2 The countries of Central Asia are at different stages of political and economic development. They face major social, political, economic and environmental challenges. The commitments with respect to the OSCE are met in varying degrees. Kazakhstan has applied for the OSCE Chairmanship in 2009 and the OSCE Ministerial Council under the Belgian Chairmanship will make a decision on this subject.

15.3 The OSCE centres in the five Central Asian countries carry out very useful work in the various OSCE dimensions. During its Chairmanship, Belgium will campaign to ensure that maximum use is made of these centres and that in dialogue with the respective governments and with civil society they *contribute* positively to the *transition* of these countries towards democracy and a market economy without the sensitive aspects of the relationship between some of them and the OSCE being ignored. The Belgian Chairmanship will work with determination to bring about more active commitment by these countries within the OSCE community.