

S-info: viewpoint

OSCE Chairman-in-Office, Dr Dimitrij Rupel

The Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe will mark the 30th Anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act on August 1st this year. It was the Helsinki spirit that inspired remarkable changes in East-West relations and helped to ensure a peaceful end to the Cold War era of confrontation and mistrust. During its history, the participating States - regardless of frequent disagreements and disputes - ultimately succeeded in reaching agreements that everyone could live with, as all sides understood the importance of achieving results.

Thirty years later, the OSCE is faced with new security, political and economic challenges, which are putting new pressures on the Organization. Having this in mind, the OSCE should redefine some of its priorities, refocus its efforts, and deepen cooperation between all 55 participating States as well at the Organisation's Secretariat. To tackle these issues a panel of eminent persons will be appointed in the next couple of weeks to begin its work on the proposals for strengthening the effectiveness of the OSCE.

Rebalancing OSCE's three dimensions of security will be one of the main tasks during our Chairmanship. More attention and resources should be dedicated to each of them. Events over the past few years call for even higher emphasis on preventing and combating terrorism. Greater efforts in tackling problems of surplus of conventional ammunition, small arms and light weapons, completing the elaboration of a border security and management concept and intensifying discussions on military doctrines, should continue as well. On the economic and environmental dimension we should be open for consideration of new initiatives. However, we cannot afford to erode our common principles and commitments on the human dimension. Thus OSCE should continue the work done so far on tolerance and non-discrimination, trafficking in human beings, together with activities in regard to migration, which will be one of the main themes of Slovenia's Chairmanship.

Slovenia's Chairmanship is - without neglecting one over the other - with special interest looking at a number of country-specific and regional issues. We are confident that targeted and pragmatic steps can contribute to thawing frozen conflicts, consolidating peace-building processes, and supporting democratization in the regions where Organisation is present with its field missions. Western Balkans represents a big investment for the OSCE. Due to its common history with the region and looking into the shared future, Slovenia will follow-up on this investment and make sure that it pays off.

One of the very first priorities on our Chairmanship's agenda will be to broker an agreement on the budget and scales of contributions. The OSCE is an organisation that offers good value for money. It is effective and in many cases unique in the tasks it performs. That is why the OSCE must receive the resources that it requires to carry out decisions taken by 55 Participating states. Possible failure to do so calls into question our shared commitment to the OSCE, and more importantly our integrity and security.

It is no mystery that Slovenia takes on the Chairmanship of the OSCE at a difficult time for the Organization. Due to some divisions among participating States about its future direction, the OSCE is more than ever in the spotlight. This creates some concern for our Chairmanship, since we firmly believe in the OSCE as an inclusive, co-operative security organization. It is as much Slovenian, as it is Russian, American, French, German, British, Italian, Hungarian, etc.. Interests and future prospects that bind participating States are far greater, than the ones dividing them. We need to build on that common ground to bridge the divides, address the discontent and prevent political fault lines from reappearing. Slovenia does not have magic solutions to all the issues on the agenda, however, as the Chairman-in-Office, I will make every effort to build a consensus within the OSCE, promote dialogue amongst its participating States and partners, and through cooperation and goodwill to find positive solutions for our common future.