



Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

Statement to the Permanent Council

Secretary General Marc Perrin de Brichambaut

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In all my years associated with the OSCE, I have never met anyone who was happy to leave the Organization, and who did not afterwards miss the excitement, achievements and companionship that we share here. Many, including myself, have sought to return to the fold, after having had a taste of OSCE life.

This, of course, has a great deal to do with the quality of life in Vienna and the splendid facilities our Austrian hosts have granted the OSCE. The beautiful building awarded to the Secretariat bears witness to this outstanding hospitality. But it is also a testament to the continued relevance of this Organization, and of the shared goals and values that bring us together.

This attachment to the Organization – this emotional and intellectual engagement of all those who collectively shape the OSCE project – reflects the unique nature of this organization. Where else does such an inclusive and varied group of states, bound together by ambitious and generous values, seek to achieve the security of their peoples through co-operation on such a wide variety of endeavours? What other organization can boast of developing, testing and implementing such a rich set of institutions and approaches, under a collective watchful process of peer review, in constant dialogue with civil society? Where else are 56 states daily – and mostly successfully – building consensus, as they have done here over decades?

The OSCE is a testing ground for new forms of governance in the XXIst century. It provides precious support and stimulus to societies in the throes of transition, helping them adopt the democratic values that are an inherent part of modernity. The OSCE remains a laboratory of ideas and a beacon of hope for all those who want to make our societies more human and

more responsive to multiple challenges, from military confrontation and criminal activities to the negative side-effects of technological change and the changes in our environment.

I think, then, you will understand me when I say that I am leaving my job as enthusiastic and committed to the OSCE, as when I took it over six years ago. I sincerely hope that I have met the expectations of the participating States in carrying out duties that are not always quite as grand as the title of Secretary General may imply, and certainly not as political as some wish they were. Your Secretary General has to combine very different tasks, without the benefit of a solid institutional framework.

- The first duty of your Secretary General is to assist in the work of the Chairmanship in all aspects of the life of the Organization. I am proud to have served with seven Chairs: Slovenia, Belgium, Spain, Greece, Finland, Kazakhstan and Lithuania. Serving such a variety of diplomatic, cultural and administrative worlds has been a great source of satisfaction and a fantastic learning experience for me. I would like to thank each of them for the trust and friendship they extended to me. Within my “programmatically co-ordinated” functions, I did my best to ensure continuity and to assist in promoting some overall coherence in the work of, the institutions and field offices, which collectively comprise this Organization. These multiple manifestations of the OSCE form the real front lines of our work. Their staff contribute a wealth of expertise and are exemplary in their dedication.
- The second duty of the SG is to serve as Chief Administrative Officer for the Organization. This task is made more challenging by the decentralized structure of the OSCE, the limitations inherent to its unfinished status and increasing budgetary constraints.

I did my best to help you to manage the managers of this Organization, at the same time respecting their unique mandates. This is one of the most challenging duties of the Secretary General – to be responsible and accountable to you for those who are reporting to you directly or through the Chairmanship. Using this opportunity, I would also like to thank those Heads of Institutions and Heads of Missions, and their staff, with whom I worked hand-in-hand during last six years. At the same time, as you

prepare to welcome your next Secretary General, I would be remiss if I did not remind you of the occasional problems that have arisen due to the gap between the accountability of this position for other Fund Managers' adherence to the Organization's regulatory framework, and the tools at its disposal to ensure such adherence.

I did my best to help you to run this lean Organization in a continuous and uninterrupted way, despite severe financial challenges facing participating States and frequent delays in the approval of its already scarce Unified Budget. I am pleased to report that over the last six years, we have achieved a zero nominal growth budget and our activities have not slowed, reaching a climax last year with the Astana summit.

- The third duty of the SG is to serve as Head of the Secretariat – an essential and under-appreciated component of the entire Organization, which provides Organization-wide programmatic and administrative support, carries out its own operational work in all three dimensions and supports you in your political dialogue.

All progress achieved within this Organization relies, to some extent, on the dedication of the compact group of professionals who support you in Vienna and of the team in executive management around the Secretary General. One of my great privileges has been to help recruit, lead and manage those outstanding people. They are accountable to you, and I do believe they provide you with very good value for your taxpayers' money. Allow me to thank each and every one of the Secretariat's staff members for the great moments we have shared through multiple crises and humble everyday routine.

Though I would want to be able to speak nothing but words of praise and thanks to all colleagues, I – regrettably – feel compelled to speak one warning: though the ACMF plays a crucially important oversight role, I must caution against the tendency of delegations to use this Committee to micro-manage this Organization, including its internal recruitment processes, like few other organizations. This practice severely limits the scope of action of the Secretariat, and poses a challenge to the necessary institutional balance within the Organization.

Beyond the three main tasks I have mentioned, the Secretary General has a standing mandate to promote and represent the Organization, making use of the continuity of his position and the access he is granted in many capitals. This is a task he shares with you ambassadors: to build support in your capitals for the values and ambitions of the OSCE project, and to make them aware that the OSCE is a valuable and unique tool that is in full consonance with the societies of the XXIst century. Following the progress we achieved in assisting Afghanistan, recent developments among our Mediterranean partners have cast fresh light on this basic truth. Make no mistake, promoting the OSCE is not an easy job because it is often perceived as mired in a set of crises and practices inherited from the past, which cloud the basic nature of the Organization as a flexible and forward-looking laboratory of ideas involved in assisting all pS in their individual progress towards more secure and democratic societies. Regrettably, and in spite of our constant efforts to create an open and co-operative network, there is as much competition as there is co-operation and complementarity among international organizations in the field of security and in supporting democratic transition. To help clear this confusion, it is important that participating States and other institutions, starting with the European Union, determine what they expect and want from the OSCE.

I would like to thank you for all the sustained contacts we have had with your officials, your civil society and the media in your capitals, and the results we have achieved together. I believe we have managed to keep all dimensions of the OSCE present in the minds of key decision-makers. I am sure my successor will be keen to carry on with this task.

Indeed, this is a never-ending job. After the peak of the Astana Summit, our Lithuanian Chairmanship has been given the task to start the implementation of the common vision of a security community, which was adopted by our heads of state. This requires the full and active support of all of you. The participating States around this table, through the unique culture of co-operation, peer pressure and continual exchange, manage to act with a kind of collective intelligence. A process based on consensus can only work and deliver if the right to dissent and object is used with considerable restraint for matters of great importance clearly within the remit of this process. Recent developments indicate that respect for this basic practice may be in danger of being lost. The last two years have witnessed an innovative sequence of collective deliberations: the Corfu Process, the Review Conference, the OSCE Summit and now the V to V Dialogues. The variety and scope of the ideas and proposals coming out of those meetings is remarkable. It is clear that today's Euro-Atlantic and

Eurasian region needs the OSCE, as much now as it did at any time in the history of the Organization. A new group of Ambassadors will soon be joining the Permanent Council, and it will be up to those of you who remain to pass along to them the common spirit that animates this Organization at its best. Together, I have no doubt that you will find the way to pull all these threads together for the Vilnius Ministerial and thereby demonstrate how relevant and central the OSCE is in today's Europe .

- In concluding my service in this Organization, I wish to thank the participating States for the trust they have extended to me in allowing me to make my contribution. These past six years have been a tremendous honour for me. I am convinced that the OSCE will continue to be active and successful thanks to you, and I wish all the best to my successor and to all those I have been fortunate enough to work with.