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Session I - Shaping a Security Community: thematic and geographic issues within a comprehensive security agenda

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After two decades, hopes for a undivided, stable and peaceful Euro-Atlantic space remain unrealized. Still there is no understanding of common goals between the new, broader Atlantic community and a number of post - Soviet states. So far we witness disagreements on how this space should be developed, on what are it's economic perspectives and on how it's different countries can use opportunities of main world developments.

The perseverance of inter-national and ethnic conflicts in the region – from the Caucasus to Moldova and Cyprus – is disappointing. The heritage of deep-rooted historical insults spoils a lot of ties and relationships.

A break-through and new strategic approach to solve these problems is highly needed. And this demand concerns the situation within the European region and Euro-Atlantic space.

Major players now presume that traditional patterns can be transferred into a common identity without great pain. These patterns, including inertial diplomatic behavior, and over-reliance on them have stemmed from the unreadiness or inability to understand the power of the region's deep-rooted relationships and rivalries.

Though there is an obvious improvement in security and well-being in Central and Eastern Europe or in some regions of the post-Soviet space, still there is some spirit of alienation in the air in many areas. Thus the task to build common house is far from its implementation.

We have to admit that after the end of the Cold War the efforts to reach effective cooperation taken by the US, Russia and the European Union as well as by the parties of the present conflicts, have failed. Failed by using the instruments of the traditional diplomacy and by reliance only on the tools of security policy.

We've faced a need to create a stewardship of cooperation to meet the challenges of this century. It should involve the potential of people outside official structures to build a new paradigm of cooperation across the region and the conflict areas. The interlink between the official mechanisms and the institutions of civil society could stimulate the governments to use the enlarged framework of instruments rather than apply only to security policy and military tools.

The existing initiatives and new approaches combined with the talents of civil society will substantially apply to laying the groundwork for a standing evolution on the basis of the principles of the Helsinki Final Act.

As a member of the Working Group on Historical Reconciliation and Protracted Conflicts of the Euro-Atlantic Security Initiative, I support the initiative that Russia, the US and the EU should declare formally at the council of the OSCE that they accept the responsibility to develop a joint Stewardship Plan for the Twenty-First Century designed to produce functioning Euro-Atlantic security cooperation.

In doing so, the United States and the EU would recognize Russia's political and security role as a full Euro-Atlantic partner in addressing the issues of this space. Russia, for its part, would accept responsibility for a constructive neighborhood policy that contributes to the growth of sovereignty, of mutual respect among nations, and of civil society in the region.

This step would contribute to increase the potential and capacities of the OSCE, which is the only organization whose membership includes all countries of the region. The principles of the Helsinki Final Act and follow-on agreements also provide a broad and mutually accepted basis for political actions in further developments of civil society. The effort should be multidisciplinary and multidimensional and depart from past initiatives. The goal would be to provide the impetus for widespread efforts. The role of the OSCE would be to coordinate and give substance as necessary.

It is widely accepted that the OSCE could serve as the main platform for discussing different initiatives. This logic suggests that the main outcome of the reform could be more powerful OSCE, with its role and functions reviewed and adapted to new realities.

However, another view has also been expressed – that the OSCE should overcome its predominant focus on the “third basket” which is in fact modified the objective of the organization as it had been originally agreed upon by the member states. There are also ideas to “revive” the OSCE by giving it more authority in preventing and settling conflicts, including peacekeeping operations.

The OSCE has been an important vehicle for the formation of the principles, approaches, institutions and mechanisms of supporting security in Euro-Atlantic area through the multilateral efforts of its member states. Its capabilities are conditioned on the willingness of its member states to faithfully implement their commitments which they have voluntarily taken upon themselves in the three “dimensions” of the OSCE – security, economy and environment, democracy and human rights. The OSCE could initiate break-through approaches and interesting solutions to some of the most contentious and difficult problems we face today and will face in the future.