



## **Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe**

### **5<sup>th</sup> Moscow Conference on International Security**

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**remarks by OSCE Secretary General, Lamberto Zannier**

Generals,  
Colleagues,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Today we hear increasing talk of a “new Cold War” and calls for a new European security architecture. Both of these conclusions are questionable.

Despite the return of geopolitics, today’s world is fundamentally different from that of the Cold War. We live in a multipolar, increasingly complex environment with many more actors involved, including non-state movements and groups that seek to exploit our divisions.

At the same time, Europe is experiencing a multiplicity of security challenges unlike any we have seen before:

- Instability and armed conflict both within our region and in our larger neighbourhood, including hybrid forms of warfare;
- An upsurge in terrorism and violent extremism;
- Growth of other transnational threats, including organized crime and trafficking in drugs, arms and people;
- A massive influx of refugees and migrants on an unprecedented scale;
- Global challenges from climate change, demographic pressures and increasing economic disparities within and between countries and regions.
- And in reaction to some of these challenges, we also see a worrying growth in populist, nationalist and even xenophobic rhetoric, creating rifts within our societies that could erupt into violence.

Because of the complexity, scale and interconnectedness of these challenges, we need to change our approach to security. We need global solutions. And global solutions can only be achieved through cooperation and coordination. Yet with the return of geopolitics, this is increasingly difficult.

Different perceptions and divergent interpretations of fundamental principles are undermining our capacity to seek common approaches. Despite important achievements in key areas of European security – including arms control, confidence-building measures, crisis prevention and conflict resolution – we have failed to ensure unconditional respect for the Helsinki principles.

The crisis in and around Ukraine is only the latest incarnation of this deeper malaise. Completely different narratives and diverging perspectives about the crisis and its origins are fueling mistrust and tensions, and we see increasing pressure for militarized responses. This obviously would only increase the risk of escalation, with a potential negative impact on protracted conflicts in the OSCE region and beyond. So all in all, it's a worrying picture.

At the same time, the hybrid nature of the crisis has shown the limits of traditional crisis management tools. This points to the need to rethink CSBMs and adjust our crisis management approach and also CBMs. We need to look for new ways to reduce tensions and to prevent crises from turning into conflict.

Last month, the OSCE participating States agreed on new confidence-building measures introducing a consultation mechanism for cyber-attacks. One of the aims is to effectively mitigate attacks on critical infrastructure that could affect more than one state. This shows that we can achieve consensus on important issues even at a time when tensions are high.

We need to find areas where we have a convergence of interests to enhance trust and confidence. Other ideas we could consider include establishing a neutral mechanism for military fact-finding or challenge inspections under an OSCE flag rather than sending national inspectors. A centralized and institutionalized OSCE verification/inspection mechanism could be modeled on similar mechanisms used by CTBTO, IAEA and OPCW. It could draw on either a pool of national experts or staff assigned to the Organization. This would allow us to avoid politicizing these activities.

The OSCE could also provide an inclusive platform for dealing with hazardous military encounters. We already have a history of negotiating arms control agreements, so why not use the Organization to enable states to cooperate bilaterally, regionally or sub-regionally by putting in place agreements aimed at preventing escalation that could result from such encounters. These agreements could include procedures to clarify the situation when encounters occur and follow-up actions to investigate them. This could be one way to utilize institutionalized military relations.

We could also consider compartmentalizing discussions on arms control in the OSCE area to enable progress on issues where common understanding is possible. Of course the bottom line has to be acknowledgment of divergent security perceptions and interests, and recognition of each other's interests. We should also look for issues of benefit to everybody.

Ultimately, to reconsolidate European security, we have to replace the current culture of confrontation with one of cooperation and joint action. For this, we also need to keep dialogue and channels of communication open, and above all, we need to work hard to achieve a durable and peaceful settlement of the crisis in and around Ukraine.

This is a crucial first step needed to bridge the East-West divide and reconfirm the fundamental principles and rules that make international relations more structured and predictable. It can only be achieved through a careful balancing of strengthened multilateralism and traditional political leadership. But then of course ultimate responsibility lies with the local actors. If they fail, we will all fail.

The complexity of contemporary challenges shows that rebuilding security in Europe will only be possible through a persistent and coordinated approach that involves a host of different actors – including international and regional organizations – working in flexible and creative coalitions and guided by strong and far-sighted political leadership.

In the OSCE, we are building broad and strategic partnerships, engaging with our Mediterranean and Asian Partners, with whom we increasingly share common concerns, because we recognize our security interests are interrelated. But we also need to learn to engage in a different way, moving beyond purely inter-governmental dynamics, beyond foreign and defense ministries, engaging civil society, young people, the media and academia, and forging coalitions with less traditional partners like the corporate and even the philanthropic sectors and international financial institutions.

We have started doing this in the OSCE through Security Days conferences and our network of think tanks and academic institutions. Toward the end of June, I will convene a Security Days conference in Berlin to encourage an open and informal dialogue on how we can revive cooperative security in the OSCE region.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am convinced that we do not need new security structures or formats in Europe. What we do need to do now is revitalize what we already have, adapt them to contemporary challenges, and – most important – renew our efforts and our commitment to European security as a common project.

We can find inspiration in the OSCE experience. Forty years ago, despite the stark divisions of the time and a real risk of failure, our leaders mustered the courage to work together to develop a shared vision and create the foundations of the security system that served us well for four decades but is now in jeopardy. We need the same kind of courage and visionary political leadership today to restore the confidence and trust needed to navigate the troubled waters ahead of us.

No matter how deep our perceived disagreements, a return to zero-sum logic would serve no one well. We face common security challenges, so we have to engage with each other in open and frank dialogue and find ways to tackle our shared challenges together. Although it will take time and patience and perseverance to reinvigorate the vision of a common future, European security is and must remain a common project.

Thank you.