



Brussels, 19 June 2013
130619/1

R E M A R K S

by EEAS Deputy Secretary General Maciej Popowski at the Opening Session of the 2013 Annual Security Review Conference of the OSCE

"Towards Helsinki+40"

Deputy Ministers,

Ambassadors, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Thank you very much for this opportunity. I am pleased to attend this year's Annual Security Review Conference, dedicated to the overall theme "Towards Helsinki+40, finding common responses to security threats and challenges". This year's contributions will also usefully feed into the Helsinki+40 process on the future of the OSCE. I would like to congratulate the Ukrainian Chairmanship for the choice of topics, which, together with the Human Dimension, very much reflects the very core issues that should be dealt with at the OSCE, as we see them.

We highly appreciate the efforts of the Ukrainian CiO in bringing forward the discussions on Helsinki+40, an initiative launched at the Dublin Ministerial. We also welcome the efforts of the Secretary General to promote continuous engagement of civil society and think tanks in the process. The Security Days that took place earlier this week can provide a valuable input to the main event, which is the ASRC.

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In my address today, I would like to first make some remarks about the main trends in the global security environment in which we all operate, and then focus on the Helsinki+40 process, from the EU's perspective.

Strategic context

We all realize that the world we are living in is one of ever increasing interdependence. The challenges we are facing are global.

The challenges of traditional threats, regional conflicts, fragile states, as well as the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction – remain as relevant and as difficult to deal with as ever. The strategic context is increasingly complex and comprises challenges at several levels. These include intra-state challenges often related to the fragility of states due to their political, economic or social situation.

Economic and financial interdependence, triggered and accelerated by rapid technological development, is increasing our dependence on each other and vulnerability of actions from each other. We are living in a world of new and very powerful communication technologies and in a global information space. Populations in many parts of the world have increased expectations to see their democratic and economic standards improved. There is a gap between these legitimate expectations and the readiness and possibilities to meet them, which may not be easy to fill.

At the same time, we witness an economic and financial crisis in several countries in the OSCE area, not least inside the European Union. In times of shrinking budgets and increased calls for austerity, pressure for enhancing efficiency and better use of scarce resources is growing.

This also applies to security matters, where enhanced coordination and international cooperation can save valuable resources. But growing budgetary pressure also requires better focus of the budgets of organisations, including of the OSCE, on what their core mandate is.

We are increasingly experiencing that events geographically far away have an impact on European security and require our attention and engagement. This is why the EU's Common Security and Defence Policy missions in operation today cover areas such as the Somali coast and Afghanistan.

This evolving security context poses challenges to the existing OSCE politico-military toolbox. International instruments that have been created to fit Cold War security requirements need to be modernised. In today's world, we need effective and creative multilateral solutions to alleviate complex political and security challenges and to modernise our toolbox to address those. I fully recognise that this is an enormous task. But I encourage open and constructive discussions by all stakeholders on this.

Helsinki+40

The EU has been a strong supporter of the Helsinki+40 process aimed at bringing forward the work towards achieving a common Security Community as envisaged in Astana. We see this as an opportunity to preserve and enhance the relevance of the OSCE also in the future and to re-sharpen its tools to effectively address evolving security challenges. It is also an important process to reinvigorate the organisation, and increase trust and confidence among its participating States.

The OSCE has all requisites to remain an important pillar of the European security architecture. Its broad membership, the comprehensive and cross-dimensional concept of security, an extensive network of field missions, and the autonomous institutions are unique and valuable assets. The OSCE also provides a continuous forum for dialogue on political and security issues among its participating States. Finally, it is able to provide – when the political will exists - a flexible response to a crisis, as proven after the events in Kyrgyzstan in 2010, or to contribute to stability through facilitating elections in Kosovo last year.

However, despite these unique strengths, the unfortunate reality is that the OSCE is experiencing increasing challenges to addressing its core tasks and everyday functioning. There has been only very limited progress in the resolution of the protracted conflicts. We see attempts by some participating States to weaken the OSCE through the budgetary process and by challenging the field missions. The inability of the participating States to agree on new decisions, in particular in the Human Dimension, but also recently in the politico-military dimension, is a matter of serious concern. This risks decreasing the relevance of the organisation in the international system. What is perhaps even more worrisome is the insufficient implementation of already agreed commitments in a number of participating States.

Furthermore, the well-known issue of the lack of trust and a common vision of security among the participating States puts a serious obstacle to the functioning of the OSCE and to bringing the organisation forward. In fact, it occasionally seems to bring it backward. Enhancing trust and confidence, and addressing the dividing lines among the participating States should be one of the main outcomes of the Helsinki+40 discussions.

I believe that the Helsinki+40 process can only succeed in advancing our work towards a Security Community, if we focus the discussions on the very core competence of the organisation and do not shy away from confronting the main obstacles.

These obstacles include achieving progress in the resolution of protracted conflicts in the OSCE area. The unresolved conflicts continue to challenge the fundamental principle of the non-use of force and remind us, more than anything else, of the fragility of the vision of a Security Community. We should use the Helsinki+40 process to consider new ways of making progress in their resolution. We should not get stalled in the conflict logics of the past century with conflict perpetuating mind-sets, but be open to looking into new ways of conflict resolution, which reflect the 21st century Europe. It is the reality today that people increasingly wish to be part of a dynamic, democratic, creative and open Europe, and want to overcome the divisions of the past. The European Union provides long term perspectives for the conflict regions through substantial support for democratisation and economic integration. Association Agreements providing for political association and economic

integration, progress towards visa facilitation and liberalisation, as well as substantial assistance contribute to this.

Strengthening the OSCE's capabilities in addressing the conflict cycle, as well as achieving tangible progress in the resolution of existing conflicts and the prevention of emerging conflicts, remains a priority for us. As the EU, we will remain deeply engaged in conflict resolution together with the OSCE, by co-chairing the Geneva talks and by participating in the "5+2" negotiations on Transnistria. In this context, I would like to highlight the constructive work of the Chairmanship to engage with all participants in the "5+2" format and push to make the necessary move to discussing the political aspects of a final settlement. We also support the resolution of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict. Last but not least, we continue to provide substantial support to confidence building measures to facilitate the political processes aimed at conflict resolution in each of the conflicts.

Another important area concerns the conventional arms control regime in Europe. We should take advantage of the Helsinki+40 process to discuss how we can develop effective multilateral solutions, including a new generation of Confidence and Security-Building Measures, as well as other relevant arms control measures, which are needed to address 21st century threats to security and stability.

The commitments in the OSCE's politico-military dimension remain a vital stabilising factor from which we all benefit. All participating States have an interest in continuing to promote Confidence and Security Building Measures.

Let me say a few words on transnational threats. Here, I would like to single out one important area: cyber security, which is becoming increasingly relevant given the rapid development of new communication technologies. This year, the EU launched its first EU's Cyber Security Strategy, establishing an international cyberspace policy for the EU. Our strategy recognises the OSCE as one of our key international partners and mentions the development of Confidence Building Measures in cyber space as a key priority. For cyberspace to remain open and free, the same norms, principles and values that we uphold offline must also apply online. For everyone to enjoy the benefits of cyberspace, it has to remain free and open. But we also need to agree the norms of state behavior in cyberspace between countries. Building on some important initiatives already launched to build trust and confidence between countries, there is a need to establish crisis communication lines and to enhance dialogue on cyber issues. Establishing a set of Confidence Building Measures on cyber security would be an important step forward for the OSCE. We therefore hope it will be possible to adopt an initial set of Confidence Building Measures very soon.

Last but not least, I would like to emphasise the fundamental importance of the Human Dimension. Human rights, democracy and the rule of law are at the heart of the EU's foreign policy and remain an important pillar of the OSCE's work. Achieving more progress in the full implementation of all OSCE commitments in the Human Dimension remains an important priority for us. Freedom of expression, online and offline, safety of journalists, as well as freedom of assembly and association, are fundamentally important. And there can be no going back on commitments already made.

I am convinced that we should build on the strengths of the organisation when discussing its future. The comprehensive concept of security, commitments and norms within the OSCE are in the common interest of all participating States and will continue to provide a strong framework for action for the OSCE. We need, however, to modernise its toolbox and equip it with the necessary resources. I remain convinced that rather than drafting new treaties, we should make the current ones fully work.

In conclusion, the European Union wishes to see a strong OSCE capable of effectively addressing the security challenges in its area. We remain ready to play our part.”
