

Distinguished Minister, dear participants,

Thank you for this invitation to commemorate the fifth anniversary of the programme of cooperation between OSCE and the Kyrgyz Government regarding Police Reform. Thank you also for the great honour you have bestowed on me with the award of this (anniversary) medal.

The Police reform and modernization programme is going very well. I know it is admired by regional partners. We can say this is a good measure of its success.

The leader of the OSCE Police Reform Programme, Knut Dreyer, will speak to you shortly in more detail about the programme – past, present and future.

Maybe I could make a few introductory remarks.

Firstly, the importance of establishing a judicial and law-enforcement system that has the citizen's trust and respect is vital for any democratic, progressive society.

This is a significant challenge in all countries. I recognize it takes time.

But I am pleased that Kyrgyzstan has committed itself to this path.

Leadership is important and I thank you, distinguished Minister as well as your Cabinet colleagues, for all your efforts to make the judicial and law-enforcement system “citizen-friendly”.

In this regard, I congratulate you, Minister, on your initiative to develop Kyrgyz ways to strengthen community policing, for example through preventive (prophylactic) community centres.

Secondly, and a related point, I would emphasize the key importance of respect for citizen and human rights in your work. A police or judiciary that ignores human rights contributes to a wider problem of public confidence in Authority and the State. One that respects human rights strengthens the stability of a nation. I am pleased that, with OSCE's support, respect for human rights is a core part of all staff training.

Thirdly and lastly, we today commemorate 5 years of fruitful cooperation. Some parts of our overall programme have reached completion. I consider it important, Minister, that we continue to maintain our active dialogue in ensuring that the Kyrgyz Authorities assume full responsibility for all parts of the programme within a realistic timescale.

The OSCE participating States are very strict – and rightly so – in insisting that OSCE does not substitute for the Host Authorities but rather builds the local capacity for the Host Authorities to assume control. Simply put, programmes have a beginning, a middle and an end. We must go forward in this way.

Distinguished Minister, dear participants, once again thank you for this occasion. The OSCE wishes you every success and fulfillment. Thank you.