



Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
OSCE Centre in Almaty

**OPENING ADDRESS AT THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ‘PROBLEMS
OF DRUG TRAFFICKING IN CENTRAL ASIA’**

**KAZAKHSTANI INSTITUTE FOR STRATEGIC STUDIES UNDER THE PRESIDENT OF THE
REPUBLIC OF KAZAKHSTAN**

WITH THE SUPPORT OF THE OSCE CENTRE IN ALMSTY

ALMATY, 19 DECEMBER 2003

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen, participants of the Conference,

There is no doubt among OSCE participating States that drug trafficking poses a serious threat to security and stability of all states, and this in particular in Central Asia. The region has emerged as a gateway for drugs, flowing mainly from Afghanistan. Drug trafficking is mostly controlled by organized criminal groups and it is closely inter-linked with other illegal activities, such as arms trafficking, money laundering, and financing of terrorism.

A number of the OSCE documents comprise provisions condemning both drug abuse and trafficking. In particular, participating-States ‘share the concerns expressed by the participating States in Central Asia regarding international terrorism, violent extremism, organized crime and drug and arms trafficking... national, regional and joint action by the international community is necessary to cope with these threats’ (1999 Istanbul Summit Declaration, Paragraph 14).



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At the Bishkek Conference in December 2001 entitled “Enhancing Security and Stability in Central Asia - Strengthening Comprehensive Efforts to Counter Terrorism”, the following measures were identified with regard to illicit drugs: a) to strengthen the capacities of CA States to control their borders and to prevent border crossing by terrorist and organized crime groups, by taking into account the situation in Afghanistan with specific regard to illicit drugs and b) to strengthen the capacity of governmental institutions to combat terrorism, organized crime and illicit drugs.

It is necessary to underline that this year’s Netherlands OSCE Chairmanship has declared the fight against all forms of trafficking, including drug trafficking, as a main priority.

This is in line with the Republic of Kazakhstan President Nursultan Nazarbayev’s statement at the First OSCE Parliamentary Assembly Forum ‘The Trans-Asian Dimension of the OSCE: A Vital Security Link’ that ‘it is essential to establish the system of countering illicit drug trafficking by joint efforts (with the OSCE)’.

It is important to note that in light of the multidimensional implications of the problem of drug trafficking in Central Asia, the OSCE concept of comprehensive security is an effective approach in fighting drug trafficking. The other component of OSCE work is conflict prevention. Here the OSCE has expertise and provides, through its institutions and field operations, practical assistance. This includes:



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- **encouraging regional co-operation in addressing common challenges such as fight against drug trafficking;**
- **public awareness campaigns, including youth education programmes of the problems associated with drug trafficking and drug abuse;**
- **assisting in developing effective national legislation and encouraging the ratification and full implementation of UN Treaties on drugs as well as OSCE documents compliance;**
- **promoting rule of law through providing assistance for training for border and custom control officials and the strengthening of judiciary.**

To sum it up, I would like to reiterate that the problem of drug trafficking is one of the most acute and topical issues at present and that it can only be addressed conjointly, at the regional level.

May I wish the participants of the Conference to have a fruitful discussion and elaborate practical recommendations as to how to counter drug trafficking.

Thank you!