



**Ständige Vertretung der Bundesrepublik Deutschland  
bei der OSZE**

Permanent Mission of the Federal Republic of Germany  
to the OSCE

**Speech by the Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Federal Republic  
of Germany at the OSCE Ministerial Council held in Ljubljana on 5 and 6  
December 2005**

Mr Chairman,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

As a newcomer to this forum I would first of all like to thank you very much, Mr Chairman, for the kind welcome I have received.

I greatly look forward to working with you all and promise that Germany will continue to do its utmost to ensure the OSCE remains an organization whose importance is recognized, whose voice is heeded and which is able to act, and to ensure, where necessary and appropriate, that it evolves further.

The OSCE makes an invaluable contribution to security and stability in Europe as well as to strengthening the rule of law. It plays a key role in conflict prevention, crisis management and arms control.

It does so on the basis of shared values. The OSCE has created forms and mechanisms of cooperation that can clearly serve as a model for others, especially in the field of crisis management and confidence-building. Here I am thinking first and foremost of the OSCE's institutions as well as its field operations and election observation missions.

Over 3,200 experts deployed on OSCE field operations from Sarajevo to Astana are lending crucial and very effective support to the reform efforts of their host countries.

As an example of these successful activities, I would cite the five Central Asian countries, where the presence and work of the OSCE creates an important platform for dialogue and cooperation.

To date OSCE experts have, in a highly professional and impartial manner, conducted over 150 election observation missions in both the East and the West. They have played a key role in helping to strengthen democracy and enhance the legitimacy of parliaments and governments throughout the OSCE area.

In its Declarations of Berlin, Paris and Brussels the OSCE has severely condemned anti-Semitism, racism and all forms of discrimination. My country is very keen to see practical steps undertaken to record and prosecute throughout the OSCE area all hate crimes motivated by anti-Semitism or racism.

There are many more achievements I could cite. I have no doubt that today and tomorrow we will hear a great deal about good progress in this field or that. Let me point out, however, that it is also essential to address and duly weigh the critical questions and issues. That is the only way to ensure the OSCE will also in future be able to tap its full potential and realize our shared vision.

For it is clearly in all our interests that the OSCE should in future be even better equipped to tackle the constantly new challenges that lie ahead.

On behalf of Germany I would emphasize that our prime concern is to enhance the OSCE'S efficiency and make its activities more transparent. Key parameters here are reform and consensus, partnership, shared responsibility and a better geographic balance.

The aim of all our efforts must be to substantially strengthen the Organization and its institutions.

We need to consider very carefully what can be continued and what needs to be changed. By the end of this reform process we for our part expect fundamental principles of proven value –the OSCE's norms and standards, for example – to

emerge strengthened. By the same token, we expect the independence and functioning of its institutions and operations to be enhanced.

As I think we all agree, reforming the OSCE can only be done through consensus. The quest for consensus is the lifeblood of the Organization. What we must not allow is stagnation. Mere insistence on the status quo is a recipe for erosion, the erosion of all that has been achieved in the 30-year history of the OSCE/CSCE. The two last Ministerial Councils finished without producing any agreement on key political documents. That is something we cannot and must not allow to happen again in Ljubljana.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Permit me a brief comment on Georgia and Transnistria. Fulfilment of the commitments made in Istanbul is in our view essential. That could pave the way, too, for the ratification of the Adapted Conventional Forces in Europe Treaty, which would also help prevent any erosion of this treaty regime. The CFE Treaty remains, I would emphasize, of crucial importance for security and stability in Europe. At the 2006 Review Conference, too, this must be made very clear.

Mr Chairman,

I have the impression that our joint efforts are progressing well. Before us we have balanced reform recommendations based on consensus which were drawn up by a council of wise men with a representative composition.

Here in Ljubljana, we now have to set the right course so that these recommendations on strengthening the OSCE can be discussed in detail and – wherever it would make sense – implemented by the next Ministerial Council in Brussels.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Key issues cannot be excluded from our discussion on the future of the OSCE. Open dialogue offers the only opportunity to restore consensus within the OSCE, as well as the Organization's full-scope capability to act.

This Ministerial Council must send out a message and demonstrate our ability to reach agreement. It must send out the message that this Organization is in the

process of renewing the consensus on its values, objectives and instruments and that it is able to achieve this aim.

It must send out the message that its Participating States are prepared to join forces to promote democracy, the rule of law and human rights, to monitor elections, to fight terrorism, to advance disarmament and to mediate in regional conflicts.

It must send out the message that they are committed to field missions, to the OSCE institutions – to the ODIHR, to the High Commissioner on National Minorities, to the Representative on Freedom of the Media, as well as to the Representatives on Combating Intolerance, to the cooperation partners and to the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly.

Mr Chairman,

My country is determined to help strengthen the OSCE's capability to act. It is the only forum on security policy within the pan-European context. Only here can we sit down together on an equal footing to discuss and decide issues concerning our common security.

We have an obligation to ensure that this Organization lives up to the expectations placed in it. That will require the commitment of every one of us.

I would like to thank you, Mr Chairman, for your tremendous personal dedication and for your professional skill. I wish the future Belgian Chairman in Office every success and a sure hand in tackling the tasks ahead.