



**PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF ALBANIA
to the International Organisations in Vienna**

ENGLISH only

**Statement by Ambassador Zef Mazi
Open Plenary of Annual Security Review Conference
*Vienna, 25-26 June 2003***

Mr Chairman,

I would like to deal succinctly with some security perceptions of a small state, such as Albania, in an effort to look forward strategically rather than engage in a discussion or analysis of issues in a way we do on a weekly basis in the OSCE.

Let me first say that the security risks facing today's Europe are different from wars threatening national integrity in the past. Hence, the question: would belonging to a military alliance strengthen security? What this may refer to could be a number of issues, in addition to those purely military, ranging from civil or ethnic conflict, environmental degradation, resource scarcity, uncontrolled and illicit migration, organized crime, money laundering, drug trafficking, transnational terrorism, etc. The search for security is, therefore, primarily a matter of deterring and, if necessary, defending not only against foreign coercion, attack and invasion through the maintenance of adequate military defenses, but also reducing the risk of, managing and eliminating these issues.

The first and, perhaps, under-appreciated advantage of the current situation in Europe is that the European environment offers to small states a setting in which their traditional security fears and anxieties are significantly reduced. There is widespread absence of a direct military threat to most of the small states on the continent. Lack of states with opposing regimes and lack of a system-wide threat is a source of great relief and enhances the small state physical security.

Secondly, the norms that now prevail in Europe are in opposition to any notion of the application of military forces to settle disputes between countries. This institutional setting is not confrontational in nature. This said, however, it would be only ideal to suggest that there are no strains to it or that this threat reduction is uniform.

Thirdly, multilateral institutions that continue to exercise governance over political and security affairs in Europe offer small states multiple opportunities for membership and participation in a wide variety of forums. They offer a wide range of outlets for foreign policy activism and the exertion of so-called traditional small-state roles. Participation in these forums enables small states to pursue a key foreign policy goal: the proverbial "seat at the table" or "voice" basically in regional affairs as a formal equal with attendant expectations of some degree of influence. Today, some small states of Central-South Eastern Europe are less fortunate in this respect. They lack access to some institutions available to the small states in the West, and now available also to some other small states in the East.

While the positive aspects of the security environment are notable, there is still reason for small states of Europe not to feel entirely comfortable or content with their environment. Small states across the continent do not hold the same judgments or perceptions of their new security environment. In different regions of the continent they have varying security anxieties and

priorities. However, it is possible to spell out some general interests that all small states share with respect to the security environment in Europe.

Despite OSCE's efforts, documents and achievements in the fields we all know, some small states, generally now in Europe's southeast, may be led to feel that they are less secure than some others. Following the latest decision of NATO to include another group of new member states, the ones "left out" cannot but feel sort of alienated, caught in a form of "*strategic limbo*" in the absence of NATO and EU membership and, in particular, in the absence of a time-perspective for it, but with a clear step toward in that direction after the Thessaloniki Summit. Initially, in Central and Eastern Europe, the threat of separatist and ethnic violence was the principle security concern. This has subsided and given way to the high-profile debate on membership in NATO, in particular. Efforts to expand the EU have encountered no small political and other obstacles, with or without all conditions met. But, as it has been clearly demonstrated, these obstacles have not been insurmountable if and when there is political will to do so.

The OSCE provides very important diplomatic forum. It however is not and perhaps will not be able to provide an adequate security assurance to states in jeopardy, if that would be the case. OSCE is going through efforts to invigorate itself by embarking upon an institutional development that may strengthen its organization and establish new opportunities for threat and risk identification, reduction and avoidance, for crisis management and, eventually, some sort of peacekeeping role.

More specifically, Europe's security must be considered in a wider context than before; state's internal security problems can have international repercussions; organised crime stands out as particularly menacing not so much because it trades in weapons and drugs but because also of the potential access to nuclear weapons. There is no tight separation between organised crime and terrorism; there is a strong demand for more security against organised crime and terrorism with particular focus. This threat is not new, it has been acknowledged since the North Atlantic Council ministerial meeting in December 1996: "we continue to support all efforts to combat terrorism which constitutes a serious threat to peace, security and stability". It becomes a highly more dangerous phenomenon when it assumes a transnational character. Our group would be able to identify a more effective OSCE contribution to combating terrorism.

The nation-state's institutional responses are inadequate to the task of facing transnational phenomena. Transnational organised crime is probably the most often discussed concern because more people are exposed daily to its consequences, whether drug, weapons and human trafficking, car theft, prostitution or general gang violence. In some countries the perception that organised crime can really weaken the state's sovereignty is quite strong. This is particularly true for those where the economic and political influence of organised crime has grown since the end of the cold war.

Uncontrolled migration was viewed less as a security issue and more in terms of how individual EU countries could absorb them in a socially viable way and, moreover, whether they could become an economic burden. Although fears have subsided, some draw an explicit link between immigration and organised crime and even terrorism. Racist sentiments have become less common but still exist on the fringes of the political debate in many European countries. Worth noting are also environmental degradation and in particular resource scarcity. The latter is in reality a very old concern for strategic planners and policy makers.

There seems to exist consensus on the need to broaden the parameters of security analysis and policy, but there still seem to be unclarity on where to draw the boundaries. Those issues that involve the use or threat of violence (e.g. civil conflict, transnational terrorism and organised crime) can be relatively easily accommodated in an expanded definition of security. Less clear are such issues as environmental degradation, population growth and migration. These are worthy of the highest priority but perhaps not necessarily as security issues, certainly until the linkages to traditional concerns are better understood. It is precisely these issues and linkages that require further research and analysis. Eventually this first Annual Security Review Conference would be a stimulant to provide some answers within the scope, purview and capabilities of the OSCE in a new environment that calls for adaptation, with meeting the needs of its Participating States, as our distinguished keynote speaker said.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.