



**Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe**

**Inaugural Remarks at the Permanent Council  
Secretary General Thomas Greminger**

*31 August 2017*

Mr. Chairperson,  
Excellencies,  
Dear Colleagues,

Thank you for your warm welcome, thank you for the confidence you have placed in me as I take up my new post. I am eager to work together with all of you to ensure that our Organization is well equipped to respond to our increasingly complicated and unpredictable security environment.

Today we face a profound crisis of confidence within the OSCE. The fundamental principles that the Organization stands for are increasingly being challenged. Our common security framework, which safeguarded stability in our region for decades, is under threat. Tensions are growing, and so too is the risk of conflict. And to make matters worse, our region faces a host of complex and interconnected transnational challenges.

Nevertheless, I am convinced that the OSCE is well positioned to do more to prevent crises from turning into conflicts, and to confront transnational challenges. The Organization has repeatedly proved itself to be flexible and

responsive. But we will only succeed if we work together, with a sense of common purpose across the entire OSCE family. This means we must intensify our efforts to protect and uphold OSCE principles and commitments; to seek comprehensive, co-operative and co-ordinated solutions; and to engage in genuine, open exchange.

As Secretary General, I will strive to enhance the OSCE's impact by focusing on three key areas:

- Ensuring that the Organization is fit for purpose;
- Reinvigorating results-oriented dialogue; and
- Strengthening and leveraging partnerships.

The OSCE was established over 20 years ago, and in that time it has grown organically instead of strategically. I want to ensure that the OSCE is well prepared to respond to contemporary challenges, with adequate resources for the ambitious goals that you, the participating States, want us to achieve. So I'll be looking hard at how we use our resources, and how we can increase our impact through greater strategic coherence, programmatic integration and long-term planning. A thorough review of management and budget processes will ensure more effective and efficient delivery, and also help us attract new funding.

It is clear that we need to continue to invest in efforts to prevent instability and conflict, which are infinitely more cost-effective than conflict management — not only in financial terms, but more importantly, in terms of human lives. Enhancing the OSCE's conflict mediation and facilitation capacities is paramount. It would bolster our efforts to de-escalate the ongoing

crisis in and around Ukraine, as well as reinvigorate our support for the established formats for managing and resolving the protracted conflicts.

I intend to strengthen the cross-dimensional synergy of action within the Secretariat and among the Executive Structures. I will work with the heads of Institutions and the Parliamentary Assembly — and with all of you — to develop a cross-cutting and integrated approach to the three dimensions, which are fundamentally interconnected. We need to reinforce our comprehensive approach to security, but also update this concept to break down the silos separating the dimensions. I trust that you agree with me that our strength is exactly this cross-dimensional approach, and that you will support my efforts.

I would also like to take a fresh look at how we could increase the attractiveness and usefulness of the OSCE for all participating States. The OSCE's extensive network of field presences is one of its most effective operational tools for promoting stability and common security, but we need to consider new approaches to enhancing the Organization's assistance, visibility and impact. This winter I will convene a Security Days Expert Roundtable to explore new ways to add value on the ground without losing sight of our central mandate to promote stability and security.

Speaking of Security Days, I see great merit in Lamberto's initiatives to create informal spaces for dialogue, and I will use both Security Days and the SG's Hour with participating States to encourage open and frank discussion. I firmly believe the OSCE is the most relevant forum for dialogue on the fundamental questions of European security, so I am happy to see the constructive engagement in the Structured Dialogue process. This process represents a small but important step toward increasing trust and confidence.

But eventually it must lead to concrete results. We should focus our efforts on areas with the potential to gain traction in the medium term.

I am committed to strengthening the OSCE's role as a Chapter VIII regional organization and further operationalizing co-operation with the UN on a range of relevant issues to enhance the OSCE's capacities to prevent conflict and resolve crises in our own region. This includes supporting the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, which are grounded in the notion that security and development cannot flourish without each other.

I will also strengthen the OSCE's partnerships with relevant regional organizations, and I intend to pursue new partnerships with development agencies, which I see as a largely untapped resource for co-operation. And I look forward to working with our Asian and Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation to make these relationships more action-oriented. I hope the participating States will support me in this effort by lifting internal constraints, particularly the "out of area" restriction on technical assistance for the Mediterranean Partners.

Dear colleagues,

Allow me to briefly mention my approach to management. Here too I plan to focus on enhancing impact.

As the Organization's Chief Administrative Officer, I will look for ways to make the Executive Structures more responsive to the needs of participating States, and to maximize the effectiveness and efficiency of the Organization. I will operate deliberately, transparently, and with an eye to the bottom line. Let

me assure you that you can count on me. I will be here to run the Organization and to be your main interlocutor.

I will also use my role as the external face of the Organization to promote the principles that the Organization stands for and the implementation of OSCE commitments; to advocate and build support for our work; to strengthen existing partnerships and forge new ones; and to raise the OSCE profile.

In carrying out my duties, I will draw on my comprehensive understanding of OSCE processes, institutions and sensitivities that I gained during my five years as Switzerland's Permanent Representative to this Organization, including as Chair of this body, the Permanent Council. I am committed to a collaborative and synergistic approach in working with the Chairmanship and your delegations, as well as with the Institutions and the Parliamentary Assembly.

I will come to you with fresh ideas on personnel issues — especially reforming the secondment system; rethinking the rules that prevent us from leveraging the talent and expertise built in this Organization; and improving gender mainstreaming in our field operations, including the SMM. I have long been a vocal advocate for gender equality and gender mainstreaming, so I will be looking for ways to mobilize synergies among the Organization's various gender instruments. I will also support continued work by my office to develop a coherent strategy for integrating youth perspectives into the work of the Organization.

I will be fully accountable to you for the results of my endeavors, and I trust that you will play an equal part in our common effort to achieve your goals for the OSCE.

Your responsibility is to invest in the effectiveness of this Organization, and to back up your commitment with active engagement, strong political support, and sufficient resources. This means that you need to give more focused guidance on how we should prioritize our work, engage in management of the Organization at the political level, and stop hiding behind zero nominal growth.

I urge each of you to be a forceful advocate for the OSCE and its toolbox in your capital. I ask you to consider not only what your capital wants—what you want—the OSCE to do, but also what kind of support you and your capital can offer to the Organization.

Here in Vienna, you can use the OSCE for more than just a platform for public diplomacy. You can also use it for conducting a genuine dialogue and striving for tangible common action. I'm convinced it is not enough to repeat what's on our websites—we need to produce concrete practical outcomes here in Vienna that strengthen the security of all our citizens throughout the Euroatlantic and Eurasian area.

It is our shared responsibility to enable the OSCE to make full use of its potential. So I'm counting on your commitment and engagement, and I look forward to working with you in the months and years to come.

Thank you very much for your attention.