

1.3. Speech at the Ceremonial Act to mark the 20th Anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act

Vienna, 30 June 1995

Mr. President,
Mr. Federal Chancellor,
Mr. Minister,
Ladies and Gentlemen.

The OSCE has come a long way since its establishment, further than just moving from Helsinki, its birthplace twenty years ago, to Vienna, its present day seat. The anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act which we mark today is not only an occasion to look back and recall the important contribution made by the OSCE to the historic change in Europe. Faced with new challenges, the OSCE must continue to be future-oriented, constantly develop its strategies and improve its capacity for action.

As much as Helsinki symbolized the old CSCE, Vienna is associated with its new chapter – the OSCE. The OSCE feels at home in Vienna. I wish to express on behalf of the Organization our gratitude to the Austrian authorities for having provided us with excellent conditions for our work, for showing so much understanding of our needs.

Vienna is famous for its beauty and charm. Helas, today's lifestyle of OSCE diplomats and officers little resembles the one of their predecessors in multilateral diplomacy so amusingly portrayed in the operetta "Viennese Blood". Sometimes they have even be reminded of their inalienable human right to leisure. But the tasks they are confronted with are challenging and pressing.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The OSCE agenda is heavy with real and potential conflicts, through which human tragedy, suffering and desperation painfully transpire. Conflict prevention and crisis management are among the OSCE's top priority tasks together with the promotion of the human dimension and the strengthening of co-operative security.

The international community is under pressure to do something in the face of conflicts. But there are no easy and simple solutions. We were all caught unawares. Like the whole international community, all other international organizations, the CSCE was also not prepared to deal with these new types of conflicts. It had no experience, instruments and methods. They have only been developed gradually over the period of the last three years.

To witness a tragedy and see little impact of your dedicated effort is a particularly frustrating experience. But we must also see the difference which the efforts of

international organizations have made through their peace involvement, be it United Nations, NATO, European Union or the OSCE. We must at the same time, when necessary, draw conclusions from bitter lessons.

This is a time when we should properly assess the role of international organizations and realize what they can do but also what they cannot do.

If they are found unable to fulfill assigned tasks they have to be strengthened. Just repeating how imperfect they are will not add strength. Political and material investment by their Member States is needed.

International organizations are as strong as the support offered to them by Member States. They are nothing more than a channel for expressing a collective will of States and a framework for their concerted action.

The European security structures are developing as a pluralistic system.. The security environment is too heterogeneous and its challenges too complex to be addressed in a single institutional arrangement. The OSCE is only one element of this structure. It is trying to make its best contribution.

Showing no complacency about OSCE's limitations we must see and recognize the difference which is made by the efforts of the High Commissioner on National Minorities, by the activities of the eight OSCE Missions in the field, by the executive action of the Chairman-in-Office, by the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, by the whole OSCE.

The OSCE has been able to secure a role for the international community in stopping the war in Chechnya. It has contributed to stability-building in the Baltics. It is the international vehicle for managing conflicts in Moldova, Georgia (South Ossetia), for restoring democracy in Tajikistan, preventing conflicts in the Crimean Autonomous Republic of Ukraine, for rehabilitating the interethnic relations in the Croat-Bosnian Federation in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The OSCE is the international framework for mediating the conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh and preparing a multilateral peacekeeping force to be deployed there.

The OSCE works to strengthen and deepen the roots of democracy, rule of law and human rights in the newly established states, helps them to consolidate their sovereignty, to integrate themselves closely with the rest of the OSCE community and manifest their identity.

Through dialogue on military security matters and arms control, confidence-building and stability measures the OSCE contributes to overcome security deficits and to prevent military threats.

The OSCE has been recognised as a key element in the European security structure. Is such a role compatible with the modest size of its budget of some 35 mln USD and the small staff of its 100 employees? The answer is a very resolute yes. The strength of the OSCE lies in the readiness of its participating States for direct action, for direct involvement.

What the OSCE needs today is not so much new financial measures or staff enlargement. What we need is more-spread knowledge about what we are doing, more understanding and more sincere political and public support to our endeavours. The OSCE needs realistically defined missions and realistically formulated expectations.

The bureaucratic overgrowth is not a likely future for the OSCE. This organization has proven to be immune to Parkinson laws.

Vienna as an international center is a seat to several organizations. Close co-operation among international bodies is a prerequisite of success of their political actions. It is also a factor of their cost-effectiveness.

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Few could probably imagine twenty years ago at the signing of the Final Act how powerful its ideas would become. Few could imagine how fundamentally the face of the continent would change with their contributions.

This should inspire and mobilize us not to be afraid of reaching out to new aims and tasks and not to give up efforts – how much difficult they may be – to implement our goals.