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Preface

The Chairmanship of the OSCE is a challenging endeavour. Beyond the operational responsibility of co-ordinating the activities of the OSCE, the Chairmanship is expected to provide political guidance for the work of the OSCE, in consultation with all participating States. This role as political driving force is a demanding task which requires a continuous negotiation process with a view to attaining the consensus of the 55 participating States of the Organization.

Our guiding principle as Chairmanship is the objective of ensuring that the OSCE maintains its important role in the international arena, both in its traditional areas of preventive diplomacy and in new tasks resulting from the changing international security context.

The fight against *terrorism* is a central priority of our tenure. We are convinced that the OSCE is in a position to bring a valuable contribution to the international strategy led by the United Nations. It is in this context that we organized in Lisbon *the first Conference among the Secretaries General and High Representatives* of the main international and regional organizations involved in the fight against terrorism on 12 June 2002. This Conference allowed the identification of concrete ways of enhancing collaboration and optimize synergies.

Our efforts are simultaneously centred on the elaboration of an *OSCE Charter on Preventing and Combating Terrorism*, which we expect to see adopted at December's Ministerial Council. It will be a political document based on the OSCE's norms, commitments and values, thus providing a conceptual framework for the operational documents adopted by the OSCE in December 2001 in Bucharest and Bishkek. The Charter will also provide for the adoption of new measures, particularly with regard to combating the financing of terrorism.

The OSCE has proved itself, over the years, to be a flexible organization which has been able to adapt smoothly and efficiently to the evolving international environment. It continues to do so today and is preparing a strategy to address the threats to security and stability in the 21st century.

We are all aware of the new difficulties and perils facing our individual and collective security and which no organization is capable of tackling on its own. The reinforcement of the co-operation and co-ordination between the OSCE, the European Union, NATO and the Council of Europe is essential to avoid duplication and increase synergy. This is the spirit of the so-called Platform for Co-operative Security which, I am convinced, should be the guiding principle for shaping the future European security architecture.

When speaking about the evolution of the European security architecture, two determining factors appear at the forefront: the European Union and NATO. Their process of enlargement will influence decisively the shaping of the future regional organizations network in the Euro-Atlantic area.

This does not mean, however, that the OSCE will not retain a significant role to play in the foreseeable future, particularly because the evolution of the European Union and NATO is not an over-night or a holistic process; we ought to preserve the arrangements which have contributed so far to consolidating ties of co-operation, not only among Europeans, but also with their neighbouring partners.

The OSCE is and should remain an effective forum, a “common house” for dialogue and co-operation in a Europe without dividing lines. One of the key features and an “added-value” of the OSCE is indeed its broad membership, which makes it a unique regional forum: simultaneously Euro-Atlantic, pan-European and Eurasian. The relevance of the OSCE’s partnership with other regions, namely in Asia and in the Mediterranean area, is clear proof of the vitality of its unique model of security.

Important attributes of the OSCE are its comprehensive approach to security, its proven ability to strengthen democratic institutions in societies undergoing transition and its capacity to respond rapidly to crises. The OSCE also draws its strength on its institutions and on its unique presence in the field through its 18 Missions, present in Eastern and South-eastern Europe, in the Caucasus and in Central Asia.

An organization is only as successful as it is useful for its citizens. Security is not an objective which stands by itself, it should also entail the trust and confidence of our communities. The involvement of citizens is essential for the success of any organization: This is our objective and this is our mandate as OSCE Chairmanship!