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## Slovenia and the OSCE

I am pleased to be able to write this article after the fourth and final year of my term as the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Slovenia to the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE). In it, I shall seek to describe the relations of Slovenia and Slovenian diplomats with the original Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE), the role of the CSCE during Slovenia's transition to democracy and independence, Slovenia's Chairmanship of the OSCE in 2005, and the current status of co-operation.

The OSCE came into being as the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe in 1975 with the signing of the Helsinki Final Act by 35 Heads of State or Government from Europe, the USA, and Canada. Over more than three and a half decades, the Organization has confirmed its position and the purpose of its activities. It played an important role in the collapse of the Iron Curtain, and has been a key factor in alleviating tensions and ensuring security and stability in Europe and its neighbourhood in a number of crises and tense situations. The democratization and transition processes that have made it possible to achieve greater prosperity and security in the OSCE region began with the fall of the Berlin Wall and the adoption of the Charter of Paris for a New Europe (1990) – the document that confirmed the end of the period of confrontation and the division of Europe, and for the first time set clear objectives of promoting democracy, respect for human rights, and market economies.

As the largest regional security organization in the world today, the OSCE serves as a bridge between Eurasia and the Pacific, the Mediterranean, North Africa, and the Middle East. Covering an area that stretches from Vancouver to Vladivostok, its 56 participating States are politically, culturally, and economically varied, but united through joint commitments and objectives – mutual co-operation and security. The OSCE has also established partner relationships with states in its neighbourhood – the Mediterranean and Asian Partners for Co-operation.

The Organization is active in three main areas, representing the three OSCE dimensions: the politico-military, economic and environmental, and human dimensions.

The OSCE ensures security through co-operation and a comprehensive approach to problems. Its priorities are:

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Note: The opinions expressed in this contribution are the author's own views and do not necessarily reflect the official positions of the Slovenian government or the OSCE.

- consolidating common values among the participating States and building a democratic society based on the rule of law;
- preventing local conflicts, stabilization, and building peace in conflict areas; and
- addressing security threats and preventing the emergence of new political, economic, and social differences.

The OSCE's founding document is the Helsinki Final Act, which defines commitments in the three dimensions.

The Organization's main tasks are confidence and security-building, early warning, preventive diplomacy, conflict prevention, post-conflict rehabilitation, human rights protection, arms control, strengthening civil society, democratization, institution building, election monitoring, establishing judicial systems, police training, and combating terrorism, organized crime, and trafficking in human beings. Recently, the OSCE has faced new threats and challenges, including those related to border security and the security of transport routes, migration, as well as environmental threats that have caused tensions and conflicts between countries.

Through its field missions in South-eastern Europe, the Caucasus, Eastern Europe, and Central Asia, the OSCE plays an important role in peace building, democratization, and promoting progress, the development of market economies, and education.

#### *Slovenia and the CSCE/OSCE: The Historical Background*

One year before the Helsinki Final Act was signed, Slovenia had, on the basis of the 1974 Yugoslav Constitution, attained the status of a state (republic) within the former Yugoslavia. Citizens of what was known at that time as the Socialist Republic of Slovenia could decide to have Slovenian citizenship. On a formal level, this created the legal possibility of extending and deepening international co-operation, which was in the hands of the Slovenian Republic's Secretariat for International Co-operation. Its work was key to shaping Slovenian diplomacy in the early days of independence.

The former Slovenian Secretary for International Co-operation, Ambassador Marjan Osolnik, today retired, remembers the signing of the Helsinki Final Act as a turning point. Slovenia (together with Croatia) obtained permission from the Yugoslav federal government to join the Alps-Adriatic Working Community. The Helsinki Final Act was immediately translated into Slovenian and had a great influence on Slovenia's burgeoning civil society. Dr Felix Bister, a Slovene historian from the Austrian region of Carinthia, informed me that Slovenes from the former Yugoslavia and Austria were able to meet each other in 1979 on the basis of the Helsinki Final Act and discussed cultural and religious questions on both sides of the Iron Curtain.

That was when he first met Dr Franc Rode, who later became Archbishop of Ljubljana and a then Cardinal, and other important dissidents from Slovenia.

Slovenia's contribution to the preparation of the Helsinki Final Act is less well known, but it is also important. Slovenian diplomats and parliamentarians were active from the very beginning. The biggest obstacles in preparing and negotiating the Helsinki Final Act were the issues of human rights and the exchange of information in the third basket. The Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) proposed a meeting of European parliamentarians to resolve these issues. The IPU Inter-Parliamentary Council (today: IPU Governing Council) appointed a working group, which was headed by Bogdan Osolnik, an experienced Slovenian diplomat and politician. In the key negotiations with the representatives of the Soviet Union, the working group was able to reach a deal that overcame the most difficult obstacles, and the path towards the Helsinki Final Act was cleared. This Slovenian contribution is all the more important given the pivotal position of human rights in the process that led to the fall of the Berlin Wall.

For Slovenia, the signing of the Helsinki Final Act had very positive, concrete results. The process of pan-European rapprochement that had been initiated by the CSCE was also important in paving the way for the Treaty of Osimo between Italy and the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, a document that still defines Slovenia's western border. Italian parliamentarians commented upon the positive consequences of the Helsinki Final Act for the Osimo Agreement to their Slovenian colleagues during the Belgrade meeting of the IPU one year later. The head of the Italian delegation was Giulio Andreotti, many-time prime minister of Italy and president of the IPU. The participants of the CSCE Follow-up Meeting in Belgrade visited Slovenia and its western borders as well as both "Goricas" (Gorizia in Italy and Nova Gorica in Slovenia-Yugoslavia), where they met both mayors. For the time, this was an almost unprecedented act.

Slovenian diplomats, working at that time in the Yugoslav Foreign Service, were also involved in the establishment and activities of the CSCE. They included the late Ambassador and longstanding State Secretary (Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs) Ignac Golob, with whom I had the privilege of working in the Slovenian Ministry of Foreign Affairs as a young diplomat. The late Ambassador Rudi Čačinovič and Ambassador Marjan Osolnik also played important roles. Ambassador Golob was active in the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe for more than a decade. He was head of the Yugoslav delegation and chairman of the Madrid CSCE Meeting in 1980. At the end of the 1980s, he was head of the Yugoslav delegation at the Vienna Meeting of the Conference for three years. In the CSCE, he discovered a unique European civilization project with an important Atlantic (and Central Asian) component.

Ambassador Čačinovič was, as resident Ambassador of Yugoslavia in Madrid, alternative chairman of the Madrid Meeting with Ambassador

Golob. Ambassador Marjan Osolnik, at that time Yugoslav ambassador in Stockholm, was deputy head of the Yugoslav delegation at the 1984-86 CSCE conference in Sweden (Stockholm Conference on Confidence- and Security-Building Measures and Disarmament in Europe, CDE), where progress was made on the transparency of military activities and on confidence-building measures. Even before Slovenia's independence, Slovenian diplomats had thus also earned respect for their work.

### *The CSCE and OSCE during Slovenia's Struggle for Independence*

The negotiation and signing of the Paris Charter for a New Europe in November 1990 were very important events for Slovenia, which, in May of the same year, had elected its first democratic parliament and government. This was also the time when the young democratic Slovenian state began to formalize Slovenia's international independence and establish itself in international organizations. In contrast to the three Baltic states, Slovenia was not able to participate in the Conference independently. The federal authorities in Belgrade also prevented Dr Dimitrij Rupel, at that time Secretary for International Co-operation of the Republic of Slovenia, from attending the Conference as part of the Yugoslav delegation. He attended the signing of the Paris Charter thanks to the generous support of Austria, which included him in the Austrian delegation. This proved an extremely useful opportunity to represent Slovenian interests and establish important international contacts. At one of the highest international political meetings, attended by numerous world leaders, Slovenia was directly able to introduce them to its plans and to inform them about the situation in Yugoslavia, thereby raising international support for its cause. Slovenia's thinking and work was directly in the spirit of the Paris Charter, and although the event did not bring direct support for Slovenian independence, it was an important step towards it.

Slovenia's presence in Paris also sent a very clear message of change. Just as a separate Slovenian diplomacy was emerging, there were also changes in the relationship of Slovenia itself towards the CSCE/OSCE. The establishment of the Slovenian state, which started with the first free elections in the spring of 1990, was already an internationally recognized fact. We also see it as highly symbolic that the CSCE was the first international organization to which Slovenia was accepted, on 24 March 1992. This was a great historical and practical milestone in the strengthening of the international status of the new Republic of Slovenia. Slovenia had applied for membership of the CSCE on 9 January 1992, even before it was internationally recognized as an independent state. In July 1992, the Republic of Slovenia signed the Helsinki Final Act.

At the OSCE Summit in Istanbul in November 1999, the Republic of Slovenia presented its candidature for the Chairmanship of the OSCE. The

proposal for the candidature came immediately after the Slovenian Chairmanship of the OSCE Forum for Security Co-operation (FSC) and was presented by the late Slovenian President and then Prime Minister, Dr Janez Drnovšek. This was the act of a statesman of an independent state with a decade of international experience in the international arena and international organizations, and which was just finishing a successful term of non-permanent membership of the United Nations Security Council.

### *Slovenia's 2005 OSCE Chairmanship*

Slovenia began its OSCE Chairmanship by announcing the “triple-R agenda” (“Revitalize, Rebalance, Reform”). When the country assumed the Chairmanship at the beginning of the year, the Organization had no budget, no accepted scale of contributions, and no agreement on who would be the next Secretary General. In order to provide a firm basis for reforming the Organization and increasing its efficiency, a Panel of Eminent Persons was formed and tasked with presenting a report.<sup>1</sup> At the end of Slovenia's Chairmanship, the goals it had set itself had been achieved, the atmosphere of co-operation had improved substantially, and the Organization had been revitalized. The OSCE had adopted a budget, accepted a scale of contributions, agreed upon a new Secretary General, and adopted a plan for gradual reform and strengthening.

The Chairman-in-Office, Slovenian Foreign Minister Dr Dimitrij Rupel, responded quickly to challenges that arose during the year (Ukraine, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan), and with his untiring personal interventions and visits to the countries involved, prevented many crises. We paid special attention to the situation in regions where peace is not secured, and with numerous activities and initiatives, tirelessly dealt with inherited frozen conflicts (Kosovo, Nagorno-Karabakh, Georgia-South Ossetia, Transdniestria). With some, progress was made in the negotiations on possible solutions, which is also evident in the documents adopted.

Within the OSCE's three dimensions, 22 decisions were adopted, a good number, and demonstrating a balance capable of overcoming the fierce criticism of the OSCE's functional imbalance made by CIS member states in 2004. At the 13th OSCE Economic Forum, which focused on demographic trends, migration, and integrating persons belonging to national minorities, Slovenia, whose Chairmanship focussed on the topic of “migration-integration”, succeeded in innovative efforts to connect the three dimensions.

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1 Cf. Common Purpose – Towards a More Effective OSCE, Final Report and Recommendations of the Panel of Eminent Persons On Strengthening the Effectiveness of the OSCE, 27 June 2005, reprinted in: Institute for Peace Research and Security Policy at the University of Hamburg/IFSH (ed.), *OSCE Yearbook 2005*, Baden-Baden 2006, pp. 359-379.

With regard to the human dimension, the greatest achievement of the OSCE Ljubljana Ministerial Council was the consensus reached on the Decision on strengthening the effectiveness of the OSCE. The consensus was in line with the discussions about OSCE reform which started in 2005, and assigned the participating States reform-related tasks to be carried out in the following years. The Decision preserved the independent status of the OSCE's Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) in election observation, and tasked it to submit a report on ways of strengthening and furthering its election-related activities. A breakthrough was achieved in the Decision on Tolerance and Non-Discrimination: Promoting Mutual Respect and Understanding, which also committed the OSCE to contribute to the UN's Alliance of Civilizations initiative and encouraged co-operation with civil society and non-governmental organizations. According to many delegations, this is one of the most important decisions, providing for future conferences in this field, and announcing that the next one will take place in 2007. The experimental project on human rights education initiated by Slovenia was widely accepted, as was shown by the support of the countries in achieving consensus on the Decision on Promotion of Human Rights Education in the OSCE Area.<sup>2</sup>

The key emphasis of the OSCE's activities in the politico-military sphere was the implementation of the 2003 Strategy to Address Threats to Security and Stability in the 21st Century. A number of decisions adopted by the Ministerial Council point, on the one hand, to the diversity of this area and to the structural complexity of relevant security challenges and, on the other, to the important progress that has been made in the co-operation of the Organization with other international actors in tackling these challenges.

Slovenia was active in many areas, providing experts and funds, and undertaking the co-ordination of activities such as the implementation of the Document on Stockpiles of Conventional Ammunition. Slovenia contributed substantially to achieving consensus on the organization of a seminar on military doctrine. Slovenia's activities in the politico-military sphere prove that the country is capable of contributing to the management of these processes with know-how, experience, and resources. Representatives of a number of other ministries were also actively involved in this area, including the defence, interior, finance, and justice ministries.

Slovenia's OSCE Chairmanship was very successful. Not only did we completely fulfil our Chairmanship plan, we also achieved the main goals set several years before when we accepted this task. This is all due to the enterprise and tireless activity of the Chairman-in-Office, Dr Dimitrij Rupel, the expert assistance of the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Slovenia to the OSCE in Vienna, and the OSCE Project Group at the Ministry of Foreign Af-

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2 For the decisions of the Ljubljana Ministerial Council, cf. Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, *Thirteenth Meeting of the Ministerial Council, 5 and 6 December 2005, Ljubljana*, 6 December 2005.

fairs. Enthusiasm for the work and a good atmosphere in both groups were the key factors of success, as were the activities of Slovenian diplomatic and consular missions abroad. With its OSCE Chairmanship and the organization of the Ministerial Council in Ljubljana, which took place in December 2005, Slovenia proved itself a reliable partner in the international arena, with the will and know-how to contribute with its initiatives and actions to the strengthening of stability in the world, and to promote international co-operation.

The Ministerial Council was, according to all participants without exception, commendably organized, which confirms Slovenia's organizational capabilities and also shows the cultural development the country has achieved. Judging by a great number of informal foreign assessments at the Ministerial Council in Ljubljana, Slovenia's Chairmanship was remarkably successful in terms of content and organization, and also one of the best in the decade.

### *The Slovenian Presidency of the EU within the OSCE*

Slovenia held the EU Presidency during the first half of 2008. It was a first time one of the "new" states that joined the EU in 2004 had held the EU Presidency. The Republic of Slovenia continued the active approach it had taken during its Chairmanship of the OSCE in 2005. This served to confirm the legitimacy of the decision to unite the European continent and, in so doing, to overcome its unnatural division. Indeed, it is a tribute to the courage with which both Western democratic countries and Central and Eastern European nations seized the historic opportunity that the end of the Cold War presented.<sup>3</sup>

The priorities of the Slovenian Presidency were largely determined by the 18-month programme initially presented by the German Presidency and which continued under the Portuguese Presidency. They were also influenced by the inherited agenda of the Council of the European Union.

This gave Slovenia five main priority areas to work on: the future of the Union and the implementation of the Treaty of Lisbon (initially known as the Reform Treaty), the launch of the new Lisbon Strategy cycle, climate and energy issues, enhancing the European prospects of the Western Balkans, and intercultural dialogue.

Our main task with regard to the implementation of the Lisbon Treaty was to encourage successful ratification. The second three-year cycle of the renewed Lisbon Strategy, whose aim was to make Europe the most competi-

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3 The following section draws from a speech that Dimitrij Rupel gave to the OSCE Permanent Council on 24 January 2008, see: Slovenian Presidency of the European Union, OSCE Permanent Council No. 697, Vienna, 24 January 2008, *Address by H.E. Dr. Dimitrij Rupel, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Slovenia*, PC.DEL/63/08, 25 January 2008.

tive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world, started in 2008. The Slovenian Presidency also worked to promote the priorities of the Lisbon Strategy in the areas of research and innovation, in the development of a competitive business environment, and in reforming the labour market to address demographic shifts. The Slovenian Presidency also undertook initiatives in the areas of energy supply and climate change. Climate change is a particularly urgent area requiring multilateral action.

Slovenia believes that the stability of South-eastern Europe is vital for the security and prosperity of the European Union as a whole. Against this background, the Presidency aimed at strengthening the prospects for European integration of the countries in the Western Balkans. Slovenia sought to re-energize and overhaul the 2003 Thessaloniki Agenda, to complete the network of Stabilization and Association Agreements in this region, and to strengthen regional co-operation in several areas. The enlargement process and the European Neighbourhood Policy were also high on our agenda.

Last but by no means least, 2008 was the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue. It is therefore appropriate that intercultural dialogue, which constitutes the foundation of the co-existence of all European citizens, was one of our priorities. Slovenia and the Slovenian Presidency understood that dialogue between cultures must be a long-term EU project. Slovenia therefore sought to increase the level of awareness of the value of intercultural dialogue and multilingualism among EU citizens and the European public at large. It is also important that the positive experience of the Slovenian Presidency is incorporated into future EU policies. Dialogue is another word for diplomacy. And intercultural diplomacy is a test case for the survival of diplomacy generally. If we do not talk, countries will fight.

As the Slovenian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dr Dimitrij Rupel, put it during his presentation of the Slovenian priorities for its EU Presidency at the Permanent Council on 24 January 2008: "Although the EU and the OSCE are two distinct entities, they are inevitably connected when it comes to common values, goals and responsibilities. After all, all EU Member States are also OSCE Participating States. Despite the different political and historical backgrounds which individual OSCE Participating States have, the OSCE has always been a forum where states were able to overcome their differences on the basis of dialogue, common values and the overwhelming sense of common responsibility."<sup>4</sup>

Slovenia welcomed many of the decisions of the Madrid Ministerial Council. Key among these were the Ministerial Statement on Supporting the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, the Madrid Declaration on Environment and Security, and the Decisions on the follow-up to the Fifteenth Economic and Environmental Forum focusing on water management, on combating trafficking in human beings for labour exploitation, on tolerance and

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4 Ibid., p. 3.



non-discrimination and promoting mutual respect and understanding, and on combating sexual exploitation of children on the Internet.<sup>5</sup>

The Republic of Slovenia strongly commends the efforts of those who worked tirelessly on the preparation of the text of the convention on the international legal personality, legal capacity and privileges and immunities of the OSCE, and we express our sincere regret that the text was not approved in Madrid. Further strengthening of the OSCE, including by the granting of legal personality, is necessary to ensure that the Organization is able to face contemporary challenges effectively.

In 2005, when we assumed the OSCE Chairmanship, Kosovo was one of the major issues on our agenda. When we took over the EU Presidency in 2008, Kosovo still was a subject of common concern. Permanent Council decisions to extend the mandate of the OSCE Mission in Kosovo are important. The continued presence of the OSCE in the key areas of human rights monitoring, institution- and capacity-building, and the rule of law is as relevant now as ever. The Slovenian EU Presidency was therefore firmly convinced that the OSCE Mission in Kosovo must be able to continue its important work. The EU will play a key role in Kosovo in the upcoming period. The Slovenian EU Presidency actively encouraged the formation of consensual solutions to ensure the long-term stability of the entire region.

At the Madrid Ministerial Council, the participating States recognized that the situation in Afghanistan could have a profound effect on the overall security of the OSCE area. The Slovenian EU Presidency welcomed the Ministerial Decision that will enable the OSCE to assist the international community by generating initiatives to enhance security at the borders Afghanistan shares with OSCE participating States.

Slovenia has been a strong supporter of OSCE activities aimed at achieving a peaceful solution to the frozen conflicts in the Republic of Moldova, in Georgia, and over Nagorno-Karabakh. The EU believes that these conflicts should be settled on the basis of the principle of peaceful resolution.

In the period of the Slovenian EU Presidency, both sides involved in the conflict in the South Ossetia region of Georgia ultimately did not do enough to utilize the existing negotiation mechanisms while avoiding escalation of the fragile situation. Nonetheless, the OSCE's confidence-building measures and reconstruction efforts in Georgia have been of great value. The Slovenian EU Presidency supported the Economic Rehabilitation Program for South Ossetia, to which the EU member states were major contributors. The EU has also started implementing its confidence-building measures in Georgia, and we hope that working together with the OSCE will continue to aid efforts to resolve the conflict.

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5 Cf. Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, *Fifteenth Meeting of the Ministerial Council, 29 and 30 November 2007*, Madrid, 30 November 2007.

Following a long stalemate in the negotiation process in the Republic of Moldova, an informal 5+2 meeting took place in October 2007. The European Union greeted this and has encouraged the parties involved to build upon these positive developments and continue with the negotiations to reach a peaceful settlement of the Transnistrian question.

With regard to efforts to secure a settlement in Nagorno-Karabakh, the Co-Chairs of the Minsk Group presented a set of basic principles for the resolution of the conflict. The EU called upon the parties involved to continue with the negotiations and to end this protracted conflict by drawing up and implementing a comprehensive peace agreement.

Slovenia believes that it is vital for the OSCE to focus more closely on Central Asia. Co-operation with the countries of that region was a priority for the Slovenian EU Presidency, as reflected in the EU Central Asia Strategy for a New Partnership with Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan.

The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Slovenia to the OSCE in Vienna had an active role in the Permanent Council and the Forum for Security Co-operation and in all four working committees of the OSCE: the Security Committee, the Economic and Environmental Committee, the Human Dimension Committee, and the Advisory Committee for Management and Finance. It also worked hard to implement the common foreign and security policy of the EU. The latter was co-ordinated at the EU co-ordination meetings, which were held regularly before every meeting of the OSCE bodies and committees.

Even before the adoption of the Lisbon Treaty, co-ordination of foreign policy was an everyday practice between EU member countries. The members of the EU Troika (current and next EU Presidency and the Delegation of the European Commission to the OSCE in Vienna) also commonly co-ordinated foreign policy with the EU candidate countries, the countries of the Stabilization and Association Agreement, the like-minded countries (Switzerland, Iceland, Norway, Liechtenstein, and Canada), the GUAM countries (Georgia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan, Moldova), the states of Central Asia, the United States of America, and the Russian Federation. Following the adoption of the Lisbon Treaty, the co-ordination between the members of the EU Troika was replaced in 2010 by political dialogue between the EU Delegation to the OSCE in Vienna and the country that holds the EU Presidency.

Besides the issues of Kosovo and Georgia, political discussions in the first half of 2008 covered election monitoring in the OSCE participating States, and, in this context, the cancellation of election monitoring activities in the Russian Federation. Questions were also frequently raised relating to the freedom of the media and human rights violations in the OSCE area. While Slovenia represented the EU Presidency at the OSCE, the Organization held its Economic and Environmental Forum in Vienna and Prague, organized three seminars in the human dimension, held a conference on human

trafficking in Vienna, prepared to adopt the budget for the year 2009, and worked on co-operation with Afghanistan.

Two important candidatures were discussed in the first half of 2008, both by the EU member states and between OSCE participating States. Ambassador Janez Lenarčič, State Secretary (Junior Minister) in the Government of Slovenia with responsibility for the EU Presidency commenced his first term as the Director of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights on 1 July 2008. On the same date, the Secretary General of the OSCE, Ambassador Marc Perrin de Brichambaut, began his second three-year term. He had been appointed for his first term during the Slovenian Chairmanship in 2005.

Work on the politico-military agenda of the OSCE in the Forum for Security Co-operation in the first half of 2008 was dedicated to the destruction of small arms and light weapons, stockpiles of conventional ammunitions, revisions of the Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security, and demining. At the Annual Implementation Assessment Meeting (AIAM), the EU presented its positions regarding the implementation of confidence- and security-building measures. The EU also made a statement on the occasion of International Mine Awareness Day, where the Slovenian Presidency, speaking for the EU, underlined the financial contributions that the EU as whole, and its member states individually, make for post-conflict rehabilitation. During this period, Slovenia also celebrated the 10th anniversary of its International Trust Fund for Demining with exhibitions of Slovenian work in the lobby in front of the OSCE Plenary Hall in the Hofburg.

During the Slovenian Presidency of the EU, we concluded negotiations with the OSCE Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings on a seminar on gender-sensitive labour migration policies, which was held in Brdo, close to Ljubljana, in February 2009.

In February 2008, the agenda of the OSCE included the monitoring of the Russian presidential elections. Because of the limitations (in terms of time and number of observers) imposed by the Russian Federation, ODIHR was forced to cancel its election monitoring mission, at which the EU expressed its regret. The EU also voiced its support for ODIHR's methodology and professionalism. This was the second time since the parliamentary elections in the Russian Federation in December 2007 that ODIHR had not been able to monitor elections. On both occasions, the head of the long-term election observers was the former foreign minister of Slovenia Dr Boris Frlec who had been Special Representative of the Chairmanship in 2005.

In June 2008, the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities (HCNM) presented a set of recommendations on national minorities in interstate relations. After lengthy discussions and negotiations, the EU welcomed the recommendations and expressed hope that they would lead to further discussions. The recommendations were officially introduced in Bolzano/Bozen in October 2008. Slovenia, together with the Office of the High Commis-

sioner, organized a first regional conference on the recommendations in March 2009, again in Brdo.

The Advisory Committee on Management and Finance (ACMF) of the OSCE Permanent Council discussed several important issues during the Slovenian Presidency of the EU: the roll-over of the scales of contributions for the years 2008-2010, the 2007 Programme Budget Performance Report, and the 2009 Programme Outline. Since the latter two issues are very time consuming, there was a proposal to merge both discussions into one.

### *Slovenian Foreign Policy and the Future of the OSCE*

The Helsinki Final Act was signed in 1975, and for Slovenia it remains a living document. It is the basis for ongoing discussions of security threats and challenges that have continued to take place in the OSCE (currently in the form of the Corfu Process), even though the security environment has changed dramatically over the last 35 years. Slovenia sees the Corfu Process as an opportunity to revitalize the OSCE, for which the implementation of OSCE commitments is the key. The OSCE, with its inclusive participation, comprehensive approach, and consensus principle, is the right forum for a thorough discussion of European security. Slovenia supported the efforts of the Greek Chairperson-in-Office and appreciates the work done so far by the Kazakhstan Chairmanship. Samuel Žbogar, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Slovenia, attended the meeting in Corfu in June 2009, also in his capacity as Chairman of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, and the informal ministerial meeting in Almaty in July 2010.

For Slovenia, the primary aim of the Corfu process must be to retain existing structures and ensure the full compliance of all parties. Of course, there is always room for improvement through strengthening and optimization, especially in light of new security challenges. In this context, Slovenia welcomed the initiative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office to reinvigorate the existing mechanisms instead of replacing them. We should aim for "Helsinki plus" and not "Helsinki II". We need a comprehensive approach. Our discussion cannot be limited to the politico-military aspects of security. We should give equal treatment to the other two OSCE dimensions. Dealing with human rights, the rule of law, economic and environmental affairs, and energy security is an essential part of the OSCE's unique comprehensive approach. Slovenia believes that renewed and redoubled attention should be given to the resolution of unresolved/protracted conflicts.

In many parts of the OSCE region, Slovenia sees threats to human security that call for the advancement of democracy, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and the rule of law. Global challenges, such as terrorism and various forms of organized crime, poverty and climate change, energy disputes (energy security), migration, and the global economic and

financial crisis create additional dimensions within the area of international security.

Dialogue on European security aims at restoring trust and confidence and the revitalization of the OSCE. The OSCE possesses an extensive toolbox of instruments, mechanisms, and procedures for involvement in conflict situations. However, recent experience in the OSCE area has shown the need to intensify efforts towards the resolution of protracted conflicts and to update the OSCE mechanisms in this regard. Slovenia therefore more than welcomes a fresh impetus. In order to fully do justice to the OSCE's comprehensive concept of security and cross-dimensional approach, the participating States should strengthen early warning, conflict prevention, and crisis management mechanisms and explore new tools that would enable the OSCE decision-making process to respond swiftly and efficiently to emergency situations.

The existing mechanisms for conflict resolution might be also enhanced. In this framework, Slovenia could look again at the approaches already used by the OSCE in dealing with protracted conflicts. Increasing the OSCE's effectiveness means strengthening the Organization. The existing structures should be reinvigorated. We should look at the Platform for Co-operative Security from the 1999 Istanbul Summit and strengthen interaction with other key actors. In this sense, the Final Report and Recommendations of the Panel of Eminent Persons on Strengthening the Effectiveness of the OSCE, which was prepared during the Slovenian OSCE Chairmanship in 2005, could be helpful.

It is vital to maintain and, where possible, strengthen the human dimension of the OSCE. The OSCE should further improve its conflict prevention capabilities while simultaneously expanding its activities in the area of post-conflict rehabilitation, including through better use of the OSCE institutions and field operations. Special attention should be given to transnational threats and new security challenges and capacities to address them. There is no need for hasty decisions and artificial deadlines. The process should be very transparent and open ended.

Shortfalls in the implementation of OSCE commitments in the human dimension have been noted in the OSCE area. The Corfu discussion should be used to close the gaps that exist and to revitalize and improve the implementation of human dimension commitments. In the field of democracy, the work of ODIHR is of particular interest of Slovenia – ODIHR is actively involved in election monitoring and a set of other activities relating to the strengthening of democratic principles. Slovenia is proud that my predecessor and the Chairman of the Permanent Council in 2005, Ambassador Janez Lenarčič, is the Director of ODIHR, which is currently the highest post in any international organization held by a Slovenian citizen.

The protection and promotion of freedom of expression is an area where the OSCE and participating States need to reinforce their efforts. A number

of OSCE participating States believe that the role of the High Commissioner on National Minorities should be enhanced – many suggest the Bolzano/Bozen Recommendations on National Minorities in Inter-State Relations should be made politically binding. Slovenia organized one of the regional conferences on the Bolzano/Bozen Recommendations and supports the idea that they be made politically binding.

Fresh ways must be found to address environment and security challenges such as energy security, water management, migration, and climate change. Economic and environmental aspects of security can be highly political, and might soon be at the forefront of strategic and geopolitical interests. Slovenia sees energy security as one of the crucial items on the political agenda. The OSCE is in the position to offer its political platform to further develop the dialogue among OSCE participating States – the Organization brings together some of the main energy producers, consumers, and transit countries. The Slovenian Foreign Ministry is promoting “green diplomacy” in all bilateral and multilateral contacts and would like to bring more awareness of climate change to the work of OSCE, not only in theoretical but also in very practical terms.

Promoting good governance, as well as combating corruption, money laundering, and the financing of terrorism contributes to the strengthening of the rule of law and ensures security and a stable, transparent, and predictable economic environment. States should work closely on the issues of border management, confidence building, and conflict prevention. The abilities of the OSCE field presences, one of the most relevant of the Organization’s comparative advantages, have to be used more. Co-ordination with relevant international partners is an extremely important means of sharing information, improving capabilities, and generating new ideas.

Finally, Slovenia believes in the continuation of the Corfu Process, with the 2010 Astana Summit as an integral part of it. We welcome the idea of drafting an action plan, which would enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the Organization and would strengthen security for all in the OSCE region.

The President of the Republic of Slovenia, Dr Danilo Türk, supported the proposal to hold an OSCE Summit in Astana at his meeting with President Nursultan Nazarbayev during his visit to Kazakhstan in November 2009. The Summit should not only reaffirm the existing commitments, but set out a strategic vision of our Organization and its co-operation with other international organizations. We support the idea of a political declaration to define a vision of European, Euro-Atlantic, and Euro-Asian comprehensive security on the basis of trust and confidence.

To conclude, I would like to quote a sentence that has been said many times about the OSCE: “If the OSCE did not exist, we would have to invent it.”