



Joint Declaration 14th High-level "2+2" meeting

Strasbourg, 23 February 2005: The OSCE Chairman-in-Office, Slovenian Foreign Minister, Dimitrij Rupel, the Chairman of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, Polish Foreign Minister, Adam Daniel Rotfeld, and the Secretaries General of Organisations, Ján Kubiš and Terry Davis met in Strasbourg on 23 February for the 14th Council of Europe–OSCE High-level meeting.

Participants stressed the Council of Europe and OSCE's important roles in promoting security, co-operation, peace and stability across the continent and to creating a Europe without dividing lines based on the core values of human rights, democracy and the rule of law.

The participants committed themselves to enhancing co-operation between the OSCE and the Council of Europe, in order to ensure complementarity and avoid unnecessary duplication of activities. They welcomed the decision by both Organisations to establish a Coordination Group to carry this work forward.

The elaboration of a political declaration on OSCE/CoE co-operation, to be adopted at the CoE Summit in May 2005, was also welcomed. The declaration would signal the long-term political commitment on the part of the two Organizations' participating/member States towards the process of co-operation and mutual support.

The participants expressed satisfaction with the conclusions reached at the Tripartite meeting held in Strasbourg on 18 February between the UN, OSCE and CoE that efforts should be stepped to protect and promote the rule of law and freedom of expression.

The joint meeting of the OSCE Permanent Council and the CoE Committee of Ministers, to be held in April 2005, was viewed as an important forum for fostering political dialogue on topics and in areas of common interest.

Co-operation between the two organisations on a number of regional and thematic issues was discussed. Special attention was paid to continued building on good practices of co-operation, creation of synergies and harmonisation of work between the OSCE and the CoE in the field.

The solution of conflict situations through political dialogue was stressed as an important prerequisite to democratic stability and sustainable development of the regions where the two organisations operate.

On the South Caucasus, the participants reiterated their support for the territorial integrity of the States of the region and called for a peaceful settlement of the Georgian-Abkhaz, Georgian-Ossetian and Nagorno-Karabakh conflicts. They agreed that both Organisations would continue to interact closely on initiatives concerning the settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and on proposals regarding the status of South Ossetia. They underlined that to achieve peaceful settlements it was important to consolidate democratic reform in particular by promoting freedom

of media, freedom of assembly and political pluralism in the region, as well as by continuing to support constitutional, electoral, judicial, law enforcement and other reforms in the States of the South Caucasus.

On Ukraine, participants expressed their full support for the country's commitment to democratic processes and reform. Noting that after the recent elections, democratic change in Ukraine has gained a new and important momentum, they pledged to continue working in the country in relevant fields including legal assistance and freedom of expression, in order to assist the Ukrainian authorities in the consolidation of democracy.

Participants also discussed the situation in Kosovo (Serbia and Montenegro) and commended the well co-ordinated work of the international community present there. They stressed their support for the Kosovo Standards Implementation Plan, which provided an indispensable roadmap for the future of Kosovo. Protection of community/minority rights was identified as a key issue for both organisations. To this end the Council of Europe continues to stand ready to assist UNMIK in the implementation of the decentralisation process including the drafting of new legislation on local government and related issues.

Participants expressed their full support for a political solution of the Transdnestrian conflict, based upon the respect of the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Moldova. They pledged to continue their efforts to assist in finding a lasting settlement to the Moldovan Latin-script schools issue. With regard to the forthcoming parliamentary elections in Moldova, the participants welcomed the deployment of an OSCE/ODIHR Election Observation Mission. They also noted the important role played by the Council of Europe and the OSCE Parliamentary Assemblies.

On Belarus, participants expressed concern about the continuing restrictive measures by the authorities against civil society and the media. They called on the government of Belarus to honour its international commitments and to allow civil society, including media, to play their vital role in furthering democracy.

On the fight against terrorism, participants stated that acts of terrorism are criminal acts aimed at the destruction of human rights and fundamental freedoms and reiterated the need for a common and effective framework for responding to terrorism in accordance with the rule of law and respect for human rights. Welcoming the Council of Europe and OSCE work in that field, the participants took note of the draft Convention on the Prevention of Terrorism and other international legal instruments under preparation. The meeting also welcomed OSCE's practical capacity-building work in helping participating States address concrete current and emerging terrorist threats.

Participants recalled the OSCE Ministerial Council Decision of 2003 on the Action Plan on Improving the Situation of Roma and Sinti within the OSCE Area and commended the setting up of the European Roma and Travellers Forum within the CoE. They also took note of the events for launching the Decade of Roma Inclusion. They reiterated their support for the joint Conference on the implementation of national and international Roma and Sinti-related policies in April 2005.

They also underlined the need for close co-operation between both organisations on the protection of national minorities, intercultural dialogue, freedom of media, migration and integration issues and the fight against trafficking in human beings. They looked forward to the active involvement of both Organisations in the implementation of the future Council of Europe Convention on action against trafficking in human beings.