



STATEMENT

by Dr Dimitrij Rupel, the OSCE Chairman-in-Office reflecting on the 60th Anniversary of the end of the Second World War

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to ask you to take a moment to reflect on the sixtieth anniversary of the end of World War Two.

Sixty years ago this month, a world at war and a devastated Europe breathed a sigh of relief as the bloody battles of the Second World War came to an end.

We mourn the tens of millions of people who lost their lives, as victims of the war, the Holocaust, occupations and acts of repression. We honour all those who fought for the victory of humanity against dictatorship, oppression and against aggression. We owe them an incalculable debt and will never forget their sacrifice.

Our generation grew up in the shadow of the war, as young people who witnessed the reconstruction or children of parents who had first hand knowledge of the horrors of the war.

We have grown up in a world that has sought never to repeat such a tragic legacy, by developing the United Nations, European Union, and other organizations. The OSCE, which has been dedicated to building peace and security through co-operation for the last 30 years, can take pride in the contribution it has made.

And yet, we live in a world that is still threatened with dangers and challenges to us all.

When we consider how far we have come in sixty years in terms of building a more united Europe, we can be proud of what has been achieved. Reflecting on the past should also put into perspective the comparatively minor issues on which we lack agreement today.

Indeed, when we consider what we all share – the desire for peace, security, and prosperity for ourselves and our children – it can be said that the common ground on which we stand is wide and strong.

Let us not let the lessons of the past fade, nor allow minor differences to undermine our common project.

Let us continue our collective efforts to create a common, indivisible democratic security space in Europe where good-neighborly relations are the norm and where there is no tolerance of discrimination and extremism.

Let us pull together to free this generation from the threat of new global menaces, like terrorism.

The OSCE can and must play a key role in building the Europe that our forefathers dreamed of sixty years ago. As we reflect on sixty years since the end of the war and thirty years since the signing of the Helsinki Final Act, let us briefly pay tribute to those who died fighting for the principles that we hold so dear. And let us move forward in our work determined to overcome the past and to do our part to make the world a safer place.