



REMARKS

**by the OSCE Chairman-in-Office Dimitrij Rupel,
on the occasion of receiving the Report of the Panel of Eminent Persons on Strengthening the
Effectiveness of the OSCE
Ljubljana, 27 June 2005**

Today I received from my good friend and colleague, Knut Vollebaek, the report of the Panel of Eminent Persons for Strengthening the Effectiveness of the OSCE. Knut, who is a former Chairman-in-Office of the OSCE when Norway held the Chairmanship in 1999, generously devoted his time to chairing the Panel.

The Report was presented to me on time. In fact I congratulated the Panel on being a few days ahead of time - before its formal presentation is made on my behalf, this coming Thursday, to the full meeting of 55 States of the OSCE.

After that, it will go forward, with further comments, to a high-level consultation process in September. It is fitting that the OSCE will be reviewing this report, which may closely influence the future of the Organization, almost at the same time that we celebrate 30 years of the Helsinki Final Act, which laid the foundation stone of the OSCE.

Over the next few days, I have some time to go through the 32 pages of the report and digest its contents, before it is presented to the 55 participating States. I will attend the annual meeting of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly in Washington, where no doubt I will face questions on its contents. However, as this report was just handed to me, I am sure you will forgive me for not being prepared at this stage to answer any detailed questions.

I am looking forward particularly to reading the recommendations, as well as the analysis of the role of the OSCE today, in the face of a changing world affecting Europe, North America and Eurasia and, of course, new security challenges.

I agree with the title of report: Common Purpose. What the 55 States of the OSCE need to do is to rediscover a sense of common purpose in addressing issues that are common to them all. I hope that the recommendations contained in this report will help to work towards that end.

To sum up, I sincerely believe that with this brief handover meeting today, the Panel has fulfilled the mandate given to it through a decision of the Sofia Ministerial Council last December.

While I have been eagerly anticipating the results of the work of the panel, this occasion is also tinged with sadness – sadness because one of the members of the panel, my old friend Nikolay Afanasievsky, died last week, just as this report, to which he had devoted so much time in the last few months of his life, was being finalised.

His contribution to the report amounts to a testament to his long-standing support for the Helsinki Process and a recognition of his personal commitment to strengthening the effectiveness of the OSCE. And so, Nikolay, on behalf of the OSCE and the Panel on which you served with wisdom and humour, this report is dedicated to you.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am the first person to receive this report. It is now my duty to pass it on to the 55 OSCE States. Only then will we be in a position to comment in more detail on its contents and recommendations.

At this point I would like to limit myself to these general remarks, and to say thank you again to Knut and all members of the Panel for their work.