



ADDRESS

**by the OSCE Chairman-in-Office Dimitrij Rupel
at the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Auswärtige Politik
*Berlin, 1 August 2005***

"The OSCE on the eve of its 30th anniversary"

Bundesminister,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Thank you for the invitation to participate in this meeting. I must say that I probably feel the spirit of Helsinki more than most people in this room since I have just arrived from a celebration there earlier today to mark the thirtieth anniversary of the Final Act of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe. I'm also pleased to be here today with my good colleagues and old friends, Hans-Dietrich Genscher, Klaus Kinkel and Wolfgang Gerhardt.

It was a wonderful event and gave one a sense of history – looking at the old photographs and standing in the Finlandia Hall where that historic meeting and signing ceremony took place thirty years ago today. In Helsinki I saw a photograph of Hans Dietrich assisting the signing ceremony.

After 1975, the iron curtain started to tear. Between 1978 and 1980, two Polish giants, Wojtyla and Walesa determined the course of positive events. In the eighties, Central- and Eastern-European dissidents started journals and NGO's, wrote manifestos, established political movements, and non-Communist parties. They formulated "the democracy agenda" that brought the fall of the Berlin Wall (1989), and a thorough transformation of Soviet, Yugoslav and other Communist societies. Ronald Reagan met Mikhail Gorbachev in 1988. Empires broke down. The political stage of Europe was taken over by young and energetic democrats who had lived on the margins of the previous society. The role of Germany and its

leaders of 1991 who opened the European perspective for Central and Eastern Europeans. The EU and NATO enlarged.

The CSCE changed the world. It brought together all those with an interest in European security to help reduce tensions and to talk about the issues that divided them. This helped the process of détente, and built trust and confidence.

In short, the CSCE process was a key element in ending the Cold War and making Europe safer and more united.

But our work in Europe is far from over. The crisis after the referenda about the Constitutional Treaty has substantially undermined the European project. That the crisis occurred is not surprising. We've been too comfortable for too long with what Europe used to be. In order to be a global actor, we need a stronger and more efficient Europe.

EU enlargement is thus a process which is not only a strategic asset but a strategic prerogative.

I've recently floated the idea of Partnership for Prosperity, which I see as some kind of a half-way house—on the way to membership, that will give states in waiting an opportunity to catch up with the EU while offer the EU time to also focus on consolidation and integration. We can't do one outside the other, and we certainly can't afford to do stability in the Balkans outside the enlargement perspective.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We have enjoyed 30 years of positive development—notwithstanding hick-ups—which has brought about the fall of the Berlin Wall, extension of stability and democracy, a rise of prosperity and ecological awareness, increase in security and a common consciousness of participating in one of the most successful enterprises of the modern era.

In fact, we have been so successful that the world of 1975 is almost unrecognizable.

Then again, so is the OSCE. It is no longer a conference made up of a series of ad-hoc meetings. The commitments remain the same – they are the bedrock of this organization. But

the CSCE is now a highly operational and highly specialized organization with institutions, field operations, and permanent consultative and decision-making bodies.

More time is spent in practical field work in assisting States than in smoke-filled rooms drafting political declarations.

There seems to be broad consensus on the need to maintain the OSCE, and even strengthen its effectiveness.

We need to maintain a baseline of common values. We need to work together to tackle common threats to our security, like terrorism, trafficking, organized crime and the dangers of extremism and intolerance. We need to help states with capacity-building in areas like police assistance, border monitoring, anti-terrorism, upholding democracy and the rule of law. We need to help develop free media, and promote dialogue between strategic groups, like businessmen, students, and academics from the various parts of the OSCE community and beyond.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I've started Slovenia's OSCE Chairmanship with a clear focus on the Balkans, but Central Asia has presented itself as an urgent priority. To be honest, the OSCE is needed as much in Central Asia as in the Balkans.

But in the Balkans we also have the EU, NATO, the UN explicitly engaged. In Central Asia, OSCE is more or less the one organization which provides assistance in governance and runs programs aimed at strengthening local capacity.

As I recently wrote in an article for the Wall Street Journal, democracy is the best long-term security policy. I hope that the free and fair presidential election in Kyrgyzstan will substantially contribute to the development of Democracy in Central Asia.

The solution to Central Asia's institutional underdevelopment will not come overnight. And our job will become even more difficult if we focus on individual cases and lose the regional perspective. Moreover, for this project to succeed, we need full cooperation and coordination

between the US, the EU, and Russia. Some form of a reconstruction and development agency for Central Asia is an idea worth pursuing.

Central Asia is also a region where Russia's "near abroad" and EU's "new neighborhood" meet. It is a region of paramount strategic importance for the US as it is interlinked with the Middle East.

Dear friends,

When something goes wrong in the Fergana Valley, it is also a European issue. Insecure WMD stockpiles are of particular concern particularly as WMD terrorism is not just a fix of wild imagination, but a menace with a growing probability of materializing. This is something we have to take with utmost seriousness.

Organized crime and terrorism are really two sides of the same coin. Here, the OSCE can do more, and this is why law, order, and good governance, in Central Asia and beyond are so relevant. We can work within the OSCE context to assess and then help secure the WMD stockpiles in Russia and across Central Asia. We have the format—let's use it also for this purpose. We must cut off the supply. I see almost no way for approaching this problem from the demand side of the equation. Bin Laden has been more than clear in stating that acquisition of WMD is a 'religious calling' of a sort.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Last month a Panel of Eminent Persons—including retired German Ambassador and former OSCE Secretary General Wilhelm Hoeynck—issued a report with a number of recommendations. I welcome it. We need new ideas as they always add vitality.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Today the OSCE is both underestimated and overestimated. It is underestimated and overestimated when it is criticized for its work East of Vienna. Some think it should have a stronger integrative role, while others believe that it interferes too much.

Germany is an OSCE heavyweight. When Germany speaks, others take note. I therefore urge Germany, both through the EU and in its national capacity, to speak loud and clear during the high level consultations in the autumn and to be an active participant in the process leading up to the Ministerial Council.

Recently I have visited Ottawa, London, Washington and Moscow. I listen carefully to the advice of my EU colleagues and of our friends in Eastern, South-Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia. I have found that in many places the OSCE is in a privileged position to assist in the processes that are truly historical.

I hope that the OSCE will remain as active and as vital to EU security and cooperation as it was in 1975. Happy birthday, OSCE!

Thank you!