



A D D R E S S

**by the OSCE Chairman-in-Office Dr Dimitrij Rupel
at the Joint Control Commission Meeting,
*Brdo, 15 November 2005***

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In the name of the OSCE Chairmanship I would like to welcome you in Brdo pri Kranju, the same location where some of the representatives of Georgia and South Ossetia met informally in March this year. It is a pleasure for me to host the meeting of Joint Control Commission, especially since this meeting comes at an important time after the September events in Tskhinvali, which I followed closely.

Almost to the day, we are gathered a year after the November meeting of late Prime Minister Zhvania and Mr. Kokoity in Sochi. It is an unfortunate fact, that the agreements reached there and at all successive JCC meetings have largely failed to be implemented. Declarations of intent might be necessary but they are not sufficient. More has to be done in practice.

In order to move forward on the path towards the peaceful resolution of the conflict, it is my belief that the most immediate task confronting us all, is to demonstrate the will and ability to enforce the demilitarization commitments made by all sides. We need to agree on a solid action plan which should be fully and rapidly implemented.

I know well that questions are being raised about the effectiveness and credibility of the JCC. I hope that this meeting will be used to look at the still unused potential of the whole set of tools within the existing mechanism apart from the JCC. It could also consider whether there are promising and positive alternatives acceptable to all sides.

Demilitarization goes hand in hand with law enforcement co-operation. This could genuinely contribute to stabilizing the situation in the zone of conflict and serve as a catalyst for increased confidence building among the population. One indicator of the willingness of the sides to move

in this direction would be the early establishment of the joint police Special Coordination Center in Tskhinvali. I sincerely hope that the first operational meeting between the law enforcement bodies from both sides - hosted and organized by the OSCE Mission to Georgia - demonstrates the potential to improve effective co-operation in this field.

It is my desire that an opportunity today will be taken to pave the way for an early meeting at the highest political level between the sides. Such a meeting is urgently needed to stabilize the situation and to demonstrate the political will to move forward the process – positively and intensively. I hope that this JCC meeting will be helpful in enabling that high-level meeting to take place.

I'm very pleased to see the Needs Assessment Study moving forward, supported by all sides. We have high expectations as it could lead to an improvement in the socio-economic situation of the population affected by the conflict. Rehabilitation and confidence building are important elements in both creating more favorable conditions for a constructive political dialogue and achieving an overall solution of the conflict.

I also know that at the last JCC meeting, all sides endorsed the stage by stage approach to conflict resolution as proposed by Georgian President Saakashvili at the United Nations General Assembly in 2004. We understand that the recent Settlement Plan presented at the Permanent Council by Georgian Prime Minister Zurab Nougaideli, further develops this approach and elaborates important aspects in more detail. For example, issues such as property restitution or a joint assessment of what were the root causes for the original armed conflict in the late eighties and early nineties of the last century. These are important questions to address in a responsible and serious way. I hope that this meeting will provide the basis for this dialogue to commence.

The OSCE stands ready to assist all sides in the process in any possible way for the peaceful settlement of this conflict. There is also wide international interest and support for this goal.

What I do believe is that such process shall not be static, and given the tools at our disposal, there is room and opportunity to move it forward in a positive and proactive way. The responsibility for that lies upon you gathered around this table.

Let me conclude by wishing you a productive meeting which will lead to concrete results.