



Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

“The Role of Regional Organizations in Promoting Regional Security and Sustainable Development”

Remarks by the OSCE Secretary General

**ACUNS Vienna-UN Conference
Vienna, 13 January 2016**

Mr. Chairperson,
Dear Co-panelists,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am grateful to the Academic Council on the United Nations System and personally to Executive Director Dr. Edgar and to Mr. Edelbacher, for inviting me to this event to brainstorm on new approaches to working toward a peaceful and more sustainable world. And it is my pleasure to share a few reflections from an OSCE perspective on the role of Regional Organizations in Promoting Regional Security and Sustainable Development, but also on the nature of the debate we have today.

The current global and regional security environment is extremely volatile and increasingly unpredictable. Conflict and confrontation, the violation of the core tenets of international law, and violent extremist ideologies are on the rise and are affecting the international system. And some of these are openly challenging the whole system of values at the basis of our civilization. The post-Cold War vision of a stable, rules-based world order seems increasingly elusive.

In Europe, the conflict in and around Ukraine continues to be a major source of tension and instability. It is shifting the continent’s decades-old security paradigm, marking the return of geopolitics on our agenda and challenging our model of co-operation. At the same time, crises in the wider Mediterranean region, including protracted unrest in Iraq, Syria

and Libya and the rise of brutal non-state actors like ISIS, have negative security reverberations in Europe and other neighboring regions. Increasingly frequent terrorist attacks, the latest only yesterday in Istanbul, are seriously affecting our security environment and making it much more unpredictable.

Many European states are also dealing with an unprecedented influx of refugees and migrants fleeing conflict and poverty. An increasingly polarized political environment in Europe and a lack of effective regional co-ordination are hampering efforts to cope with this challenge effectively, and xenophobic forces are attempting to hijack these issues to advance their own political agenda.

Ensuring lasting peace, security and stability for more than a billion people in our 57 participating States in Europe, Asia and North America is a major OSCE objective. In the face of such challenges, as well as growing transnational and global threats, regional organizations like the OSCE must step up their efforts to co-operate more effectively to maintain peace and security. In line with their respective mandates and comparative advantages, international and regional organizations should increase their co-ordination to ensure an effective division of labour, efficient use of resources and to create new synergies.

The complexity of the challenges we face calls for new approaches and fresh ideas, mobilizing our communities, changing the way we operate first of all, building coalitions of relevant actors within the international community and developing public-private partnerships, engaging with the academic community, engaging with the civil society and mobilizing in particular women and youth.

To facilitate this process we should make full use of the potential of Chapter VIII of the UN Charter, which continues to be underutilized. Setting up a permanent co-ordination mechanism for international and regional organizations at the Secretariat level could be a way to make our long-term co-operation more pragmatic and operational.

As the world's largest regional security organization under Chapter VIII of the UN Charter, the OSCE firmly supports international efforts to maintain peace and security by providing a strong link between European and global security. We have a long-standing and

fruitful cooperation with the UN and other regional arrangements on many thematic and regional issues. This relationship continues to evolve in a positive way, as we strive to intensify our interaction and make it increasingly operational and result-oriented. The OSCE response to the crisis in and around Ukraine is the most visible example of the OSCE's ability to live up to its Chapter VIII responsibilities and take collective action in the face of a crisis at both the political level and on the ground. Our Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine, the Trilateral Contact Group and other OSCE initiatives are all contributing towards de-escalating the conflict.

The OSCE also provides a good regional platform for co-operation in countering terrorism and radicalisation and promoting tolerance and non-discrimination. Our cross-dimensional activities in these areas confirm the substantial contribution that regional organizations acting under Chapter VIII can make in support of UN-led international efforts. In this context, I wish to underscore that the OSCE co-operates closely with partner organizations in this global effort, including the UN, the EU, CSTO and the Alliance of Civilizations. The benefits of this kind of collaboration have been plentiful - we explored this in full in the course of our Security Days held in May 2014, which discussed ways to revitalize the role of regional arrangements under Chapter VIII of the UN Charter - and we are committed to continued co-operation in the future.

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Last fall when I addressed the UN Sustainable Development Summit, I highlighted the role that regional organizations can and should be encouraged to play in promoting and implementing the 2030 Development Agenda. This ambitious agenda represents a historic turning point with the potential to renew hope, re-energize action, and re-invigorate partnerships. I was particularly pleased that it recognizes that "Sustainable development cannot be realized without peace and security; and peace and security will be at risk without sustainable development." We need now to act on this and turn word into reality.

The OSCE is first and foremost a security organization, and its comprehensive concept of security concept offers effective tools to promote sustainable development. In

many ways, the recognition that economic and environmental issues and human rights are integral components of regional security is as valid today as it was in Helsinki 40 years ago. One of the Organization's key contributions to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda will be its enduring engagement in conflict prevention, conflict resolution and post-conflict rehabilitation. The OSCE will continue to serve as a platform for inclusive dialogue and co-operation around hard and soft security issues, which have a direct impact on development. And we intend to engage to revitalize arms control and military confidence building tools whose effectiveness has been eroded by re-emerging confrontation in the OSCE space. Also here, we find in the UN a strong partner. I am glad to say this in front of Angela Kane, former UNHR on Disarmament, with whom I have worked closely during her tenure in office.

Achieving gender equality is a cornerstone of our security approach, which protects and promotes the human rights and dignity of women and men. OSCE efforts to empower women and girls and to mainstream gender into policies and activities at both the State and Organization level are fully compliant with the post-2015 development agenda.

The reality of international migration as a global phenomenon reminds us that we need to develop co-operative, rights-based approaches to ensure that migration can continue to act as a powerful catalyst for development. Efficient migration policy frameworks, including at the regional level, and including effective regional policies to regulate the flows, are a key ingredient. The OSCE can offer a useful platform for dialogue and provide expertise drawing on our comprehensive and cross-dimensional security concept. On 4 March, I will convene an OSCE Security Days event in Rome devoted to bridging national and regional responses to migration.

There is obviously a two-way relationship between the environment and security, and it is necessary to bring the security perspective to the international environmental discourse. The OSCE intends to continue supporting the achievement in our region of the sustainable development goals on water management and climate change, for instance by facilitating co-operation among states with shared water resources and making full use of the potential offered by water diplomacy to increase security and stability in our region. We welcomed the success of the Paris Climate Conference, COP 21, where the international community struck a new global agreement. We supported the "Road to Paris" by holding an OSCE Security

Days event devoted to “Climate Change and Security” last October in Vienna. Our increasing engagement in promoting sustainable energy and disaster risk reduction will also contribute towards achieving the relevant Goals of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda.

Good economic governance, the rule of law and economic development are prerequisites for peaceful and prosperous communities and nations. The OSCE’s activities promoting international economic co-operation, enhancing the climate for business and investment, streamlining regulatory frameworks and countering corruption, money laundering and the financing of terrorism will also support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. And also in these areas we are joining efforts, first and foremost with the UN, but also with many other partner organizations, to forge effective responses to traditional and emerging challenges.

The Environment and Security – ENVSEC – Initiative is a concrete example of this approach. Our lasting partnership with UNDP and other specialized UN agencies in ENVSEC will continue to enable joint and co-ordinated action in support of the new Sustainable Development Agenda. Or looking closer to home, our Joint Action Plan with the UN Office on Drugs and Crime - we will review its implementation with Executive Director Fedotov in the next few weeks. Both our organizations are using this create synergies in tackling transnational threats ranging from organized crime to human trafficking to corruption.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda is ambitious and visionary. Achieving its goals within the next 15 years will take major efforts by all stakeholders – and these efforts will be made stronger by partnerships and co-operation. The OSCE has long advocated this approach, and now we are working even harder to strengthen our existing partnerships and build new ones. By working together, we can multiply our impact.

Thank you, and I wish you fruitful discussions.