

APPEAL of the CIS Member States to the OSCE Partners

Astana, September 15, 2004

Next year marks the 30th anniversary of the signing of the historic Helsinki Final Act, which laid a firm groundwork for the current system of pan-European security. Under today's conditions, the foundation of regional security and the development of mutual relations between states remain the fundamental Helsinki Principles, in particular, sovereign equality and respect of inherent rights inherent to state sovereignty, the nonuse of force or threat of force, inviolability of borders, the territorial integrity of states, noninterference in internal affairs, respect for human rights, and others.

Guided by a desire for constructive cooperation within the OSCE and for raising the effectiveness of the fulfillment of the function laid upon it – to act as a forum for equal political dialogue and decision-making on the most important issues of security and cooperation in Europe and in development of the Moscow Statement of July 3, 2004, regarding the state of affairs in the OSCE, the countries of the Commonwealth which have adopted this Appeal address to the OSCE partners the following considerations and suggestions:

- to reinforce the OSCE activities in combating international terrorism and eradicating its underlying causes. A necessary step in this direction is the perfecting of the OSCE instruments, in particular, the financial and staff reinforcement of its antiterrorism unit. This can be achieved by reducing the OSCE expenditures in the highest-cost-prone sectors of its activity. We stand for the implementation in full and throughout the Organization space of the provisions of the OSCE Strategy to Address Threats to Stability and Security in the 21st Century, adopted by the OSCE Ministerial Council at Maastricht (2003);
- to continue participating constructively in the settlement of regional conflicts throughout its space within the framework of existing negotiating formats and mechanisms. The CIS states are ready to make their contribution to implementing the decisions adopted by the OSCE in this important sector of its activity;
- to make full use of, and improve the OSCE's unique capacity in the military-political field. For these purposes it is important to speed up the entry into force of the 1999 Agreement on Adaptation of the CFE Treaty, which is the cornerstone of the system of European security. An important stimulus in this process is the ratification of the Adaptation Agreement by Ukraine, Belarus, Kazakhstan and Russia;
- to carry on work on the adaptation of the Vienna Document 1999 of the Negotiations on Confidence- and Security-Building Measures. A topic for serious discussion could be questions concerning the military doctrines of the participating states. We stand for enhancing the role of the Forum for Security Cooperation and for preserving its autonomous status and the right to take independent decisions;
- to develop a full-fledged OSCE economic and environmental dimension. The mechanisms established and the documents adopted in this sphere do not ensure in full measure the proper implementation of the agreements set forth in the Helsinki Final Act and other documents of the Organization in the field of free trade, the improvement of business contacts and capabilities,

industrial cooperation, energy and transport development, investment, exchanges in science and technology, and environmental protection. A principal task is to achieve equal conditions for trade and economic cooperation throughout the OSCE space in the interest of all the participating states. It is likewise expedient to ponder implementing projects that have a social significance for the participating states. As before, the questions of employment, of support for low-income population sections and of the supply of drinking water remain one of the major problems in the OSCE space;

- to promote more balanced OSCE work in the humanitarian sphere. We consider insufficient the level of fulfillment by a number of states of their obligations for ensuring the freedom of movement and contacts between people, improving the conditions for tourism, expanding ties in the area of education and science and exchanging and disseminating cultural values between all the participating states. These question should also be adequately reflected in the OSCE agenda;

- to ensure the development and adoption of uniform objective criteria for the evaluation by the ODIHR and the OSCE missions of electoral processes throughout the Organization space, including the realization of the proposals from a number of CIS countries for carrying out a comparative analysis of the electoral legislation and law enforcement practice of the OSCE participating states;

- to move away from the practice of limiting OSCE field activities to the monitoring of the political situation, with a priority emphasis in the course of its reform on specific project activities which should be carried out transparently, through the mechanisms of the Secretariat and the specialized institutions of the OSCE, taking into account the needs and requirements of the receiving states. Special attention ought to be devoted to improving the procedure for the appointment of heads of the missions;

- to continue developing partner cooperation with other organizations on the basis of the Platform for Cooperative Security, adopted at the summit in Istanbul in 1999. We call upon the Chairmanship to step up consultations on the establishment of an ad hoc consultative mechanism in line with the provisions of the OSCE Strategy to Address Threats to Stability and Security in the 21st Century;

- to proceed from the necessity of preserving the fundamental consensus principle operating within the OSCE;

- to facilitate the development of new, and systematization of the existing OSCE Rules of Procedure which would regularize and improve the procedures being used in practice;

- to seek practical realization of the principle of fair geographic distribution of posts in the Secretariat, specialized institutions and field presences of the Organization, as also in the election observation missions;

- to ensure the transparence of the OSCE budget, including its extra-budgetary sources, the practical use of which should be agreed on with all the concerned parties. We favor intensifying the work to revise, before the end of 2004, the scales of contributions for the OSCE budget, based on participating states' real ability to pay and on UN methodology;

- to examine carefully the proposals for enhancing the political role and weight of the Secretary General, coupled with the optimization of the Secretariat with a view to raising the effectiveness of the Organization's activities.

In 2005 the world will be marking the 60th anniversary of the end of the Second World War. We suggest discussing within the OSCE possible commemorative events and steps of the Organization and adopting an appropriate decision at the ministerial meeting in Sofia.

We call upon the OSCE Chairmanship-in-Office and participating states to consider the questions raised in this Appeal and to take them into account when adopting decisions at the next meeting of the Foreign Ministers of the OSCE participating states in Sofia on December 6-7, 2004.

Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russian Federation, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Ukraine