

**STATEMENT OF THE DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER OF
ITALY**

HON. UMBERTO RANIERI

TO THE MINISTERIAL COUNCIL OF THE OSCE

(Vienna 27-28 November 2000)

Madame Chairperson,

First of all, I would like to express to you, hosting us so generously in this historic European capital, Italy's gratitude for the way in which the Austrian Presidency of the OSCE, under your expert guidance, has fulfilled its task.

1. Twenty-five years ago the Helsinki Final Act was signed, a milestone in the creation of a new Europe. With that signature, in recognising fundamental principles freely accepted by all participating states, the CSCE set out to overcome the traditional east-west antagonism, imposing itself as a common European forum for dialogue and political negotiation. After 1990, with the Paris Charter and its new vision of co-operative security, it became the Regional Organisation encompassing our continent.

So much has changed during the past 25 years and our organisation with it, constantly promoting and adapting to historic events and to dynamic realities. But the principles enshrined in the Helsinki Final Act are still with us to guide our actions. They represent an essential legacy as well as the political framework within which our nations identify themselves, binding us together in a common vision of co-operative security. It is on the basis of these principles that over a decade OSCE has emerged as an International Organisation. Last year at the Istanbul Summit it was possible to adopt both the European Security Charter for the XXI Century and the new CFE Treaty, two essential documents in the creation of a new security architecture for our continent.

By setting aside bipolarism and affirming international co-operation, OSCE acquired a range of new responsibilities, codified in the Charter's

conflict prevention, crisis management and post-conflict rehabilitation tasks. Very extensive responsibilities that OSCE cannot undertake on its own and seeks instead to achieve in co-operation with other European Security Organisations, according to the criteria of mutually reinforcing institutions.

2. Threats to security derive no longer mostly from conflicts between States or military aggressions. The causes of crises either are to be found in transnational phenomena, such as terrorism, illicit drugs and organised crime, or are essentially internal to States, both affecting the individual and his role in society. In this field of human dimension, OSCE has acquired in recent years a clear comparative advantage with respect to other International Organisations, deriving from the activity of its institutions and missions and the experience they gained in the field, in areas ranging from special regard for national minorities to the strengthening of democratic institutions. For their tireless contribution to achieving such outstanding results we give credit to the Representatives of the OSCE institutions, the High Commissioner for National Minorities, Ambassador van der Stoep, who is departing after eight years of invaluable dedication, to the ODIHR Director, Ambassador Gerard Stoudman, and to the Representative of the Media, Freimut Duve.

OSCE's most recent commitment to Children in Armed Conflicts, to the control of small arms as well as to the trafficking of human beings, in particular women and children, identifies precisely three pivotal issues, which represent a threat at a global level as well as to individuals and civil society as a whole. Italy, with the strong backing of its public opinion, is particularly sensitive to these issues and therefore ready to grant them its full support. The Organisation should devote itself to these issues in the entire OSCE area. This should be achieved in two different ways: firstly through its normative activity, in establishing the necessary principles by the documents we are about to approve, and secondly in ensuring their effective implementation in the field, especially in crisis areas. It is important that these issues are dealt with in the framework of the Stability Pact, where international 'co-operation in South Eastern Europe can best be achieved.

France's EU Presidency has already expressed the position of the member states of the European Union. It is important to note that the positions of the EU, as expressed by the Common Foreign and Security Policy, will find special affinities in the OSCE fora and may therefore acquire a more meaningful political resonance, well beyond the relationship of the EU with Associated Countries, thereby contributing constructively to political dialogue, in particular in the Permanent Council.

I would like, however, to add another consideration on behalf of Italy. We are living in very intense times, full of events and transformations, spreading with unprecedented speed and intensity throughout our continent, often leaving our citizens confused, in need of new guarantees. It would be appropriate that the Vienna Ministerial Council send all European countries a reassuring message, by re-casting OSCE as the Organisation most suited to express the common political will to establish peace and stability in Europe.

3. Let me now express my personal welcome to President Vojislav Kostunica, who leads the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia's delegation participating for the first time to the OSCE Ministerial Council, as well as to all the representatives of the nations of the area, who are aware of Italy's commitment and efforts to bring about peace and stability in South-Eastern Europe. With the admission of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, our Organisation once again boasts 55 Member States and now includes, among its members, all the actors in the Balkan area. Italy hopes that this event will finally produce the beginning of a virtuous circle in the region. We are convinced that, with the new democratic developments in Belgrade and the positive outcome of the elections in FYROM and Albania as well as in Kosovo, and with the progress, albeit slow, of the stabilisation process in Bosnia and Herzegovina, all the political conditions for a profitable resumption of political dialogue between all States of the area are coming together. We can only condemn in the strongest terms the senseless acts of violence which still occur in Kosovo, such as the one on the Yugoslav Representative in Pristina, a few days ago. Only a resumption of a meaningful dialogue, as we have witnessed few days ago at the Summit in Zagreb, can bring to this region peace and stability.

OSCE has played a fundamental role in this respect. A role which was recognised in the Dayton Peace Agreements for Bosnia, and by the United Nations in Croatia, Albania and Kosovo. OSCE must continue to play its role, especially within the Stability Pact, in the present phase of post-conflict rehabilitation. Italy has always believed in a regional approach for the stability of South-Eastern Europe. Even outside the framework of OSCE, as you may recall, we always tried to promote such an approach with all the countries of the region, at first with the Central European Initiative and, more recently, with the Adriatic Initiative as well as in the Stability Pact.

4. After the comprehensive statement by the EU Presidency, I would avoid repeating the many regional conflicts and crises areas that the OSCE is called upon to deal with. From Chechnya to Transdniestria to South-Ossetia and Abkhazia, and last but not least to Nagorno-Karabakh. It is indeed important to analyse the developments as well as to ascertain the causes of the often inadequate results achieved so far. But it might be even more important to study together how to strengthen the action of the OSCE, which added value and which new instruments can be used by our Organisation in its attempts to find new solutions.

The same point should be made for two other areas which Italy considers of great importance for the safety and stability of our continent: the Caucasus and the five Central Asian countries. Both areas have complex problems but also an enormous development potential. Italy, in the capacity it has held until a few days ago of President of the Council of Europe, has had the opportunity to devote new attention to them. We believe that the complexity of their problems should be dealt with in a regional context, while taking into consideration individual situations.

5. In order to be consistent with OSCE's global security approach we should not neglect the economic dimension of the Organisation, nor the environmental one, closely associated with it, the impact of which is so relevant for the well being of our citizens. Without the prospect of economic growth, accompanied by the improvement of living standards and combined with effective action against corruption, which represents one of the greatest obstacles to such development, it would be naive to

expect progress in crisis areas or permanent solutions to security problems. OSCE must endeavour to deal actively with these issues, also.

6. Important developments have taken place at the operational level of the Organisation, in the crucial sectors of conflict prevention and crisis management, from the brand new Operational Centre, to the civilian assistance group (REACT). They represent a new dimension for the OSCE. This progress in the area of peace operations, that the Chairman in Office of the OSCE is setting up, implementing the mandate received by the Istanbul Summit, places our Organisation at the forefront of civilian crisis management. A development that should proceed in closer connection with the similar evolution underway in the United Nations and other International Organisations in Europe. The presence with us of the U.N. Deputy Secretary General Amb. Frechette is, in this regard, highly significant.

Such a positive evolution should not however affect the specific nature of the OSCE and its acquisitions as a regional security organisation in Europe. It is essential that the OSCE, even with its new operational capabilities, remains above all the indispensable forum for political dialogue and international negotiation, with the primary objective of contributing, together with other European Security Organisations, to the preservation of conditions for peace and stability in our continent.

Let me conclude by renewing my deepest gratitude to our Chairman in office, Mrs. Ferrero Waldner and greeting the Rumanian Foreign Minister, who will have the responsibility of leading the Presidency of the OSCE in the first year of the new century. On behalf of Italy I wish to assure him of our support and full co-operation.

Thank you Madame Chairperson.

