

Preface

The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) – and its forerunner the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) – has worked hard over the past 30 years to overcome the political antagonisms that divide people in our part of the world. The work has been tackled not only by governments, but also by people from all walks of life: non-governmental organizations, unions and associations, academics and numerous other groups and individuals.

Germany, like the Netherlands, has been a staunch supporter of the OSCE's work and efforts from the outset. The Organization and its participating States have come a long way following the upheavals that shook Europe during the nineties. Germany, more than any other participating State, has experienced these changes, this transformation of the political climate that culminated in the fall of the Berlin Wall and the subsequent reunification of the Federal Republic of Germany and the German Democratic Republic.

The Netherlands now holds the OSCE Chairmanship for the first time. It is the Chairmanship's responsibility to ensure the co-ordination and continuity of OSCE policies as well as to keep abreast of political developments both internationally and within the Organization.

Many important topics figure on the OSCE agenda for 2003 and beyond. From this wide spectrum of concerns, I would like to highlight two issues: terrorism and the fight against various forms of trafficking. The first issue has topped the international agenda since 11 September 2001. Only a comprehensive approach will suffice given the complex and global nature of terrorism. At the same time, fighting terrorism must not be allowed to undermine our citizens' fundamental human rights.

The Netherlands sees the second issue – trafficking in human beings, small arms and light weapons and drugs – as a clear example of a new threat to security and stability in the 21st century. Trafficking not only causes human misery, it undermines both national economies and political systems. It is therefore important for the OSCE to develop a strategy to address these new threats, as was decided upon in Porto last December. This strategy must be the result of our joint efforts, governments and civil society alike. And it is up to us to make it work.

In June 2003, the first Annual Security Review Conference was held in Vienna. This conference marked the start of a process that will hopefully come to serve as a valuable instrument for monitoring the extent to which the participating States fulfil their security commitments.

The OSCE has come a long way. But in the current climate of change, reforms are needed that will prepare the Organization for the challenges

ahead. Administrative reforms are therefore more than an internal organizational matter: They are dictated by the ever-changing international political landscape. It is our common goal to make the OSCE as effective as possible.

The OSCE is known for its comprehensive concept of security. Security is more than arms control and smoothing over political differences. In the last instance it is about people: giving people the protection they need to live their lives in dignity. Our primary concern is thus with the provision of security to individuals, minorities and socially vulnerable groups. Without due regard for human rights and economic and environmental development, it will be impossible to achieve lasting peace and sustainable security. The Organization's practical experience of making such connections at field level – something of which it can certainly be proud – demonstrates that the OSCE is permanently working at the cutting edge of conflict management. This is clearly the OSCE's unique selling point compared to other international organizations.

We in the OSCE must continue our efforts, impelled by the joint commitments of all participating States. The OSCE has always made a point of collaborating closely not just with governments and international institutions, but also with the various groups and organizations that constitute civil society, with non-governmental organizations and with the academic world. This 2003 Yearbook is once again proof of the scope of activities of institutions like the Institute for Peace Research and Security Policy at the University of Hamburg (IFSH) and the active stand they take in the OSCE region. The book contains a wealth of information and analysis bearing on a wide range of issues related to our work.

We are grateful for the valuable contribution that institutions such as the IFSH make to the never-ending efforts to establish and maintain peace and security in our part of the world. Their contribution not only benefits academic discourse in this area, but also, and more importantly, it enhances the ongoing political and public debate on this important matter in Germany and elsewhere in the OSCE region.